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Tonight's Jackpot

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Celebrity Buzz

T.R. Knight ready to leave Grey's?

pg 44

MySpace connects with Google

CYBERSPACE MySpace.com is teaming up with Internet search leader Google Inc. in a campaign to extend MySpace's reach and counter the expansion of its common rival Facebook Inc.

The alliance, unveiled late Monday in Paris, builds upon MySpace's seven-month-old effort to make it easier for the 127 million worldwide users of its online hangout to connect with their social circles while they're at other Internet destinations.

MySpace is trying to pull it off by making its login system, called MySpaceID, compatible with any website that wants to embrace it. By working with a similar service offered by Google, MySpace is betting more sites will welcome its audience. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

World pg 13

Scandal over Obama's seat

Automotive pg 23

Winter safety stumps drivers

Travel pg 30

Global guide to new year's

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Funeral **Farewell to Ted Rogers**

RENE JOHNSTON/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Loretta Rogers holds a rose from the casket after the funeral for her husband, media giant Ted Rogers. Friends and family said their last goodbye to Rogers yesterday during a moving service at the Cathedral Church of St. James in downtown Toronto. **Story, page 3.**

Ignatieff a shoo-in as leader

Harper hopes to 'sit down' with incoming Liberal chief

Michael Ignatieff has seized his long-sought prize — the Liberal leadership — raising fresh questions about the future of the opposition coalition that has vowed to defeat the minority Conservatives next month.

The fate of the coalition will be among the pressing issues facing Ignatieff as he prepares to take over the leadership of a party battered by cash woes, two lost elections and dismal poll numbers.

The Liberal MP for Etobicoke-Lakeshore was assured of the leadership yesterday after Bob Rae — the last rival candidate in the race — dropped out, conceding he didn't have enough support to win.

The Liberals are in a rush to have a new leader in place by the end of January, when a budget vote could see the Tories defeated, sparking a new election or paving the way for a Liberal-led coalition to take power.

Ignatieff, 61, who vowed to "outwit and outthink" the Conservatives, must decide whether to remain in the coalition with the NDP, and defeat the government.

On Sunday, Ignatieff said "coalition if necessary but not necessarily coalition."

"I think it's very important for Canadians to have the coalition option so that if Mr. Harper presents a budget which is not in the national interest we can present to Canadians a coalition alternative," he told CTV's Question Period.

Yesterday, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said he's hoping the new leader will "be willing to sit down with me" and talk about the economy.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

MORE COVERAGE, PAGE 10

Timeline

- Ignatieff could take the Liberal helm today. That's when Liberal MPs and senators are expected to recommend he serve as interim leader.
- He won't be ratified as full-time leader until the party's convention in May.

Banks refuse to match key interest rate cut

ECONOMY The Bank of Canada slashed its key interest rate yesterday by three-quarters of a percentage point to the lowest level in half a century and confirmed that Canada's economy is "entering a recession" because of the deepening global economic slump.

But chartered banks refused to match the deeper-than-expected cut, dropping their prime rates by only half a percentage point, the second time in the past few months that some have balked at passing on the full savings to consumers and businesses.

Canada's benchmark overnight rate now stands at 1.5 per cent, the lowest since 1958, as the Bank of Canada tries to revive the flagging economy and restore confidence by making it cheaper to borrow money.

The central bank also hinted more rate cuts may be in the offing.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

History

- The reduction was the single-biggest cut since the aftermath of the 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States.

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BEAUTY at the Bay

Woman receives more jail time for elder abuse
A 42-year-old woman charged in a "horrific" case of elder abuse that included leashing a frail 69-year-old man to his bed was sentenced to three months more jail time after serving more than seven months. Yasmin Madi, 42, of Richmond Hill, pleaded guilty in a Newmarket court yesterday of failing to provide the necessities of life. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Local

York sets deadline

York University officials have decided that if the strike by teaching staff does not end by Monday classes will not resume in 2008. York's Executive Committee of Senate has ruled that only if the strike ends before Monday is there enough time to notify students that classes are back on before the usual shutdown of campus between Dec. 24 and Jan. 4. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Tomorrow's Metro

Food

Barb Holland offers some great kitchen gadgets for the gift-giving season.

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What's online today.

Video Jon Stewart tackles Ottawa's political showdown at **metronews.ca/canada**

Lotteries

Ontario Pick 3: 2 9 6; **Ontario Pick 4** : 8 7 6 4
Encore: 2487681
Daily Keno: 3, 6, 8, 10, 12, 24, 27, 29, 33, 35, 37, 38, 39, 43, 45, 48, 59, 62, 64, 68
These results are not official.

'A devoted family man'

Family, friends, dignitaries bid farewell to Ted Rogers

Described as a visionary businessman, philanthropist and devoted family man, media giant Ted Rogers was remembered yesterday at a service commemorating his life. Rogers, 75, died last week after a long battle with heart disease.

A who's who of Canadian politics and business attended St. James Cathedral to bid farewell to a man many call a leader and an inspiration.

A single white rose adorned Rogers' coffin — a tribute to the man Alan Horn, chair of Rogers Communications, described to the 1,200 in attendance as a proud Canadian, young at heart but wise in years, a man "who lived large and dreamt large."

"He was a riverboat gambler, the hustler, the senior salesman ... a man with a mischievous sense of humour ... to use his own words, truly a scalawag."

Stephen Harper, Jim Flaherty

Mike Harris

John Tory

Frank McKenna

David Peterson

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Rogers' children praised him, recalling how no matter how busy he was, he always had time for them.

"He would cancel shareholder meetings to come to our swim meet or game or recital or parent-teachers night," said Martha Rogers, who spoke of her father's love for her mother, Loretta.

"He loved her in the way every woman wants and dares to be loved," she said. "He thought my mother was the most beautiful and wondrous thing."

Daughter Lisa read a prayer, and son Edward said his father could connect to "a head of state and the person cleaning the toilet bowl and everyone in between."

Their sister Melinda described him as a "hands-on" father who loved to roughhouse. "With your passion and perseverance you taught us nothing is out of reach," said Melinda. "We will remember you every time a cellphone rings." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Boy, 15, dead in apartment fall

BODY A 15-year-old boy is dead after falling from the 14th floor of an Etobicoke apartment building Monday night.

Police were responding to a break-and-enter call at 44 Willowridge Rd., near Martin Grove Road and Eglinton Avenue West, around 11 p.m. when they found the body of the teen at the front entrance of the building.

Stanley Badu was pronounced dead at the scene. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

News in brief

CRIME Police are warning GTA residents about a rise in distraction thefts in the past year. Police say the criminals, typically from Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and El Salvador, work in groups of two to a dozen. So far this year, there have been hundreds of thefts across the GTA, said Det. Const. Nadine Teeft, a Toronto investigator. The methods vary depending on the group and the scam.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Police seek suspect in abduction attempt

Police are searching for a suspect who tried to abduct an 11-year-old boy in the city's north end yesterday. The boy was walking in the Langside Avenue and Gary Drive area around 8:30 a.m. when a man in a grey or green four-door sedan called out to him and ordered him into the car. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

United for more funds

A coalition of United Ways from Peel, York, Durham and Oakville are pushing for better access to health care and social services in rapidly growing communities where services aren't keeping pace with demand.

The United Ways — joined by Growing Communities Healthcare Alliance, the York Region Human Services Planning commission and Peel Fair Share Task Force — are responding to a recent report that reveals how residents in fast-growing communities continue to be shortchanged by inequitable provincial funding.

United Way of Peel CEO Shelley White, a member of the Strong Communities Coalition, called upon the Ontario government to provide equitable funding to "help build strong, supportive and healthy communities that will play a key role in Ontario's economic turnaround."

The coalition is also calling for the establishment of a task force to look at how to improve funding of health and social services in burgeoning areas, which affects about 4 million people.

The PricewaterhouseCoopers report, the third annual commissioned by the Strong Communities Coalition, found in 2006-07, provincial funding for social services in the GTA/905 was $193 less per person than elsewhere in Ontario, resulting in a $641.9-million shortfall in burgeoning communities.

To bring those regions in line with the rest of the province would mean more than doubling funding, the report noted.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Growth

- Between 2001 and 2010, population in the GTA/905 is expected to grow by 32.3 per cent, compared to 11.5 per cent across Ontario.

VINCE TALOTTA/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Randal Paul Medford, right, and Rudolph Anthony Watson (a.k.a. Syrus) get their groove on at Yonge and Dundas streets yesterday. The young performers from Scarborough have scored an online hit with their ode to Toronto transit called I Get On (The TTC).

Rap for Rocket riding high online

It's been 22 years since the Shuffle Demons released their classic, Spadina Bus, and more than half a century since The Subway Song celebrated the construction of the Yonge line in the 1950s.

Now there's a new ode to Toronto transit, a rap song and video called I Get On (The TTC) that has attracted thousands of hits on YouTube and social networking sites since it was posted last week by a couple of 21-year-old performers from Scarborough.

The affectionate, lighthearted look at the city's quintessential ride on the Rocket was written, performed and shot by Humber College student Syrus, whose real name is Rudolph Anthony Watson.

His friend, Randal Paul Medford, a former MuchMusic intern and graduate of Centennial College, assisted with the video shoot, backup vocals and 10 hours worth of editing on the project. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Station to station

- Instead of convertibles and scantily clad women, the Toronto duo's version features scenes from Keele and Kipling stations, the 43 Kennedy bus and the TTC stop near Syrus' home.

Man protests corporate bailout bids

ECONOMY Chris Morren, struggling businessman, was standing at Union Station yesterday when a woman he had never met offered him $10. Insufficient, he said. He needed $1 billion.

"It's not for me," he called to passersby. "It's for the Ontario economy. You'll get it back. I can't promise you when you'll get it back, but you'll get it back."

The commuters hurried past, some smiling. Some stopped to stare at Morren's white sandwich board: "Where's My Bailout?"

Morren, 47, runs a one-man company from his home in Etobicoke. It is doing poorly, he said. But he is not asking for government assistance: It's his fault, and nobody else's — just like it is the fault of the Big Three automakers that people are not buying their cars.

Morren said he wanted to "challenge the politicians to do the right thing:" To stand up for the average taxpayer at the expense of the corporate behemoth.

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Scarborough Town Centre
Sherway Gardens
Square One
Stone Road Mall
Tecumseh Mall
Toronto Eaton Centre
Upper Canada Mall
Vaughan Mills
Yorkdale Mall

Tow truck company robbed, employees assaulted

Two armed men assaulted employees and stole $1,000 cash from an east-end tow truck business last night. Five employees at Ratler Manufacturing Inc. were held up during the robbery. Two were injured. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

School off to slow start

Will enough students enrol in Africentric program?

Wanted: At least 32 more students for the most controversial new school in Canada — and the clock is ticking.

As Toronto's Africentric Alternative School prepares to open next fall, would-be principals are being interviewed, lessons are being planned and the roomy North York school that will host it is getting ready to share its playground and computer lab.

But only a handful of parents have turned out for two recent meetings for interested families and supporters say the Toronto District School Board is not doing enough to publicize the program.

To be able to open, the program needs at least two classrooms of about 20 students each in two consecutive grades between kindergarten and Grade 5.

Location

- The program will open in a wing of Sheppard Public School, on Sheppard Avenue West, west of Keele Street.

With eight students enrolled since registration began a month ago and officials eager to start hiring teachers, will enough students show up in time to make it a go?

"People don't know about this — the board should have put up a flyer in every school," said parent Maryann Scott.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Brit partner for film stage

STUDIO Filmport, Toronto's giant but underused film stage, is about to get a new partner — the big British film company Pinewood Studios.

No one involved in the deal was talking yesterday, but a late addition to the agenda of today's city council meeting is a confidential report on proposed amendments to Filmport's lease with the Toronto Economic Development Corp., or Tedco.

Tedco is owned by the city. It holds the land on which Filmport sits, and has leased it to Filmport for 99 years.

A source said the lease amendments are needed because Pinewood has struck a deal to buy a minority interest in Filmport.

Pinewood produces blockbuster movies. Recent films include the newest James Bond film, Quantum of Solace, The Bourne Ultimatum and Brideshead Revisited.

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Man stops fleeing robber
A citizen risked his life to grab a fleeing bank robber in Richmond Hill, police say. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Man arrested after rampage

Six cars were damaged in a strange incident Monday night at a Burlington car dealership where police say a man used his vehicle as a battering ram.

After allegedly damaging the vehicles, Halton Police say the driver of a Mazda pickup drove through a window of the Roseland Volkswagen Dealership on Guelph Line in Burlington.

A member of the dealership's cleaning staff was leaving when she noticed the man's erratic behaviour and called police, said shop manager Brett Leggat. He said four new Volkswagens and a used Toyota truck were damaged. A customer's 2008 VW Jetta was also damaged in the incident.

Legatt said the dealership's security camera caught the man ramming his truck "as fast as it would go" through the door of the showroom.

After allegedly urinating on cars inside the dealership, police say the man returned to his vehicle, grabbed an unopened bottle of champagne and a glass and went to the roof.

Once there, he allegedly committed an indecent act.

He was arrested without injury, police said.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Charged

- Guillaume Mercier, 36, of Hamilton has been charged with mischief over $5,000, and committing an indecent act.

Livent boss victimized, defence says

LEGAL Livent co-founder Myron Gottlieb is the victim of conniving staff who manipulated the theatre company's books and, when discovered, blamed it on him and partner Garth Drabinsky, a judge has been told. The prosecution of Gottlieb and Drabinsky on fraud charges relies on discredited and self-interested witnesses, Brian Greenspan, Gottlieb's lawyer, argues in his final submissions, released yesterday. The prosecution has alleged, in written submissions, that Gottlieb and Drabinsky had the most to gain from the alleged fraud, but that ignores the fact that at no time did they cash out their extensive holdings, Greenspan argues in his 107-page document.

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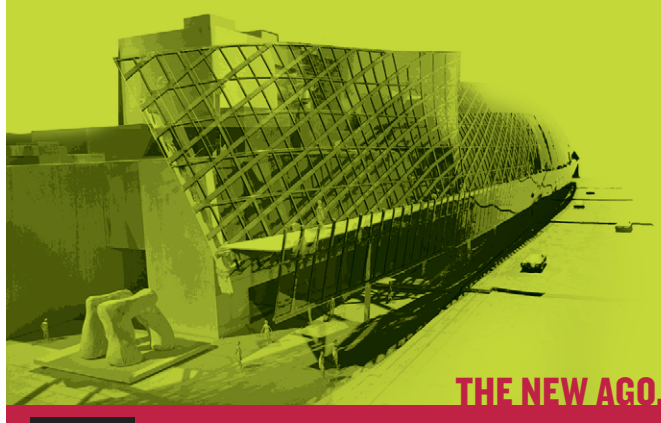

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East Coast booming despite recession

Newfoundland and Labrador is bucking the global economic meltdown as the province is forecasting a revised surplus of $1.27 billion for the 2008-09 fiscal year — more than double its spring budget projection. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada

Too many sick days

It's "unacceptable" that jail guards in Ontario are taking an average of 32.5 sick days per year, Premier Dalton McGuinty said yesterday as his government was hammered over revelations in the auditor general's latest report. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Rae drops out of race

He just came to realize he could not win.

Toronto MP Bob Rae looked neither dejected nor weary — two of the many adjectives used to describe his demeanour following his loss in the Liberal leadership race two years ago — as he explained why he had changed from defiant to co-operative in less than a day.

But while supporters publicly applauded his decision to withdraw from his second campaign yesterday, privately there was bitterness over a perception of rumour-mongering at Rae's expense by the Michael Ignatieff campaign. Said one Rae backer: "This is all pretty difficult to accept."

Rae acknowledged yesterday some of his supporters had to be convinced the decision was for the best. A relaxed-looking, maybe even relieved-looking, Rae said that "of course!" he would still be vying to become Liberal leader if party officials had decided in a late-night conference call to consult with all party members instead of the few hundred elite likely to favour his old friend and rival Michael Ignatieff.

ADRIAN WYLD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Bob Rae announces yesterday he won't be a contender for the Liberal party leadership.

"You have to be realistic about these things. It's just politics. It's not the end of the world here, folks."
Toronto MP Bob Rae

But they didn't.

"You have to be realistic about these things. It's just politics. It's not the end of the world here, folks. I mean, a decision had to be made."

If this past week was a long time in the life of Stéphane Dion, then Rae must have been reeling from a single day.

Rae had been defiant Monday afternoon as he portrayed himself as the champion of grassroots democracy opposing the "coronation" of his rival. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Charest shrugs off separatist resurgence

RESULTS The day after his tepid election victory, Quebec Premier Jean Charest found himself examining the sovereigntist resurgence in the province that ensured his Liberal party barely passed the majority mark.

At his post-election press conference at the National Assembly yesterday, Charest questioned any analysis that the Parti Québécois resurgence means that sovereignty increasingly beckons.

"Take that with a grain of salt," Charest said. "Let's put things in their rightful place. The issue in this election was the economy and it stays the economy. That transcends all other issues."

The PQ, led by Pauline Marois, on Monday fared much better than anyone had predicted, capturing 51 seats and 35 per cent of the popular vote. The PQ had been floundering in third place since the last election, and polls suggested it might get 28 per cent of the vote, no better than the 2007 election.

In a historic first, there are now two sovereigntist parties represented in the National Assembly with the election of Amir Khadir, co-leader of the ultra-left Québec Solidaire in the Montreal riding of Mercier. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Temp workers applaud improved regulations

Temporary workers in Ontario say they no longer feel like second-class citizens now that the government has introduced legislation to stop unscrupulous employers from taking advantage of a growing segment of the workforce.

There are nearly 700,000 temporary jobs throughout the province and for years, temp workers — many new Canadians or women — have fought to get basic employment rights. Improving the Employment Standards Act is part of the Ontario government's ambitious anti-poverty strategy, unveiled last week. Ontario is vowing to reduce child poverty by 25 per cent in five years.

If passed, temp workers' rights would be improved, in everything from holiday and termination pay to more contract information and stopping the practice of temp agencies charging prohibitive fees to workers. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

News in brief

HEALTH More than 2,000 children around the world die every day from a preventable injury — a number that could be cut in half if countries adopted proven injury prevention measures, the World Health Organization says.

In its first global analysis of the issue, the WHO found preventable childhood injuries are the leading cause of death for children older than nine. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Manitobans owed money, auditor general says
The Manitoba auditor general says taxpayers are owed $21 million because thousands of people on welfare who have received extra money in government assistance haven't returned the cash. THE CANADIAN PRESS

'Once in a while, you step in it'

McGuinty acknowledges he 'overreached' on teen driving law

In the supermarket and even out for a stroll, Premier Dalton McGuinty was pestered over the furor his government created with a plan to limit teen drivers to having no more than one teen passenger.

That's why he gave in earlier this week and scrapped the move that was part of changes aimed at making Ontario roads safer for teens, who have higher accident rates.

"I got hit with it everywhere," McGuinty said yesterday, acknowledging the Liberals "clearly overreached" with the controversial proposal that was to reduce distractions for new drivers.

"I'm talking about the grocery store, going for walks. You know, every once in a while, you step in it."

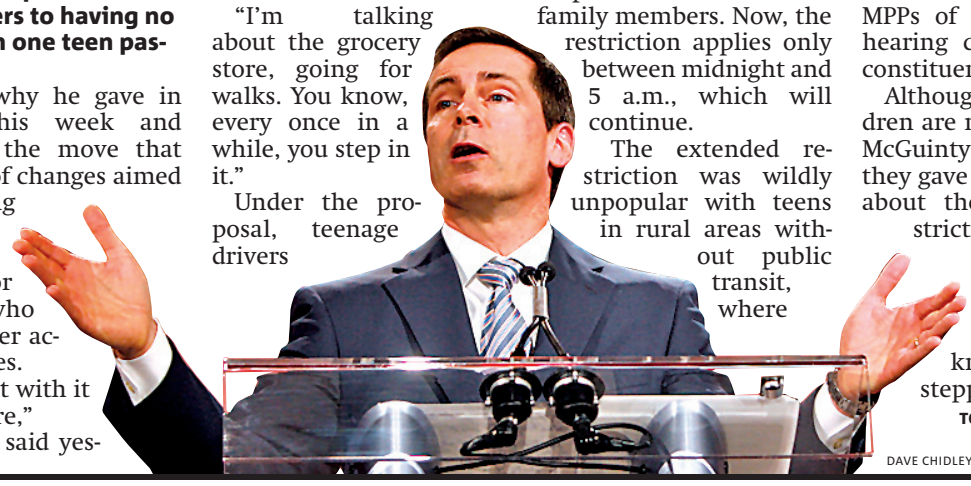
Under the proposal, teenage drivers would have been limited to one passenger 19 or younger at all times during the first year of their G2 licence, with an exemption for immediate family members. Now, the restriction applies only between midnight and 5 a.m., which will continue.

The extended restriction was wildly unpopular with teens in rural areas without public transit, where carpooling is a way of life. More than 150,000 young people went on the social networking site Facebook to register their displeasure with the plan and MPPs of all stripes were hearing complaints from constituents.

Although his four children are now in their 20s, McGuinty joked that even they gave him a hard time about the passenger restriction.

"When my own kids began to picket my own home I knew I'd overstepped."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE


DAVE CHIDLEY/THE CANADIAN PRESS

News in brief

CHARGES A female teacher at a Roman Catholic high school in Burnaby, B.C., is facing five sex-related charges involving a Grade 11 student. The RCMP say the teacher at St. Thomas More Collegiate is accused of four counts of sexual exploitation and one of sexual assault.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

Palin talks hockey, hunting on CTV morning show

She may have been lambasted by late-night comedians for her lack of foreign policy experience, but Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin seems to know a thing or two about Canada.

In an interview with CTV's Canada AM yesterday, the failed Republican vice-presidential candidate said her home state and Canada have a lot in common.

"We have our love of hockey, our love of the great outdoors and hunting and fishing and all those things that really attract us to this northern part of our globe," she said.

Palin's "the difference between a hockey mom and a pitbull is lipstick" comment earned her a lot of fans among Canadian hockey moms.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Staffing company says it's 'hopeful' for 2009

In a break from the recent steady flow of negative economic news, staffing service Manpower Canada says its latest survey of employers points to a "hopeful" hiring outlook for early 2009.

Manpower conducts a quarterly survey in 33 countries where it operates. It said yesterday that Canadian employers foresee a "mild hiring climate" in the January-March period.

That contrasts with most other countries surveyed: Only Canada, the United States and Switzerland showed improvement in hiring expectations compared with the previous quarter.

The survey of 1,800 Canadian employers indicates 16 per cent expect to increase payrolls in the first quarter of 2009 while nine per cent anticipate cutbacks.

Seventy-two per cent said they expected no change and 3 per cent were uncertain about their near-term staffing intentions.

"Despite the global slowdown ... data reveals employers in Canada will continue to expand their payrolls."
Lori Rogers, Manpower

Said Lori Rogers, vice-president of operations for Manpower Canada: "Despite the global slowdown, seasonally adjusted data reveals employers in Canada will continue to expand their payrolls and at a slightly stronger pace than in the previous quarters."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Edmonton employee charged after bomb scare

An employee has been charged after a bomb scare at a Rona hardware store in Edmonton. Police say they were called to the store after a staff member reported finding two explosive devices. METRO NEWS SERVICES

News in brief

JUSTICE A New York appeals court this afternoon will consider reinstating the lawsuit of Maher Arar, who was mistaken for an al Qaeda member and tortured. His case was originally thrown out in June.

RIGHTS An Ontario aboriginal leader who was imprisoned earlier this year for interfering with a mining site says a Supreme Court ruling that he won't have to return to jail is an important victory for civil rights.

ENVIRONMENT The toxic tailings ponds from Alberta's oilsands mines leak enough contaminated water into the region's aquifers every day to almost fill five Olympic-sized swimming pools, according to a new analysis by two environmental groups. New oilsands projects would worsen that figure. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Vancouver **Pickton anniversary**

DARRYL DICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Jayson Fleury, brother of Mona Wilson who Robert Pickton was convicted of killing, holds a poster in her memory as people gathered to mark the one-year anniversary of Robert Pickton's conviction for the murders of six women.

Chief warns of climate crisis

Chief Bill Erasmus of the Dene nation in northern Canada has a stark warning about the climate crisis. He says once abundant herds of caribou are dwindling, rivers are running lower and the ice is too thin to hunt on.

Erasmus has raised his concerns in recent days on the sidelines of a UN climate conference under way in Poznan, Poland.

He is among those seeking to ensure that North America's indigenous peoples are not left out in the cold when it comes to global warming negotiations.

The 54-year-old elected leader of 30,000 native Americans in Canada, and representatives of other indigenous peoples have met in Poland with the UN's top climate official, Yvo de Boer.

They are also lobbying national delegations to recognize them as an "expert group" that can participate in the talks like other non-government organizations.

"We bring our traditional knowledge to the table that other people don't have," he said.

"To give indigenous people and local communities a voice in these discussions is very important."
Kim Carstensen

Nearly 11,000 national and environmental delegates from 190 countries are negotiating a treaty to replace the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which regulates emissions of carbon dioxide that scientists blame for global warming.

The alliance of native peoples include groups from the forests of Borneo to the depths of the Amazon.

De Boer said he advised the alliance to draw up a proposal and muster support among the national delegations.

"To give indigenous people and local communities a voice in these discussions is very important," said Kim Carstensen, the climate change director for WWF.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Welfare cheques don't fund 'basics needed for survival'

SUPPORT Welfare incomes in Canada are increasingly inadequate to meet basic needs, according to a report to be released today in Toronto, with Ontario seeing the harshest loss over the past two decades.

In 2007 dollar terms in Ontario, between 1992 and 2007, a lone parent's welfare declined by almost $5,500 (from $21,931, which is 25 per cent).

A couple with two children saw a loss of almost $8,150, which was down from $29,207; or 28 per cent, says the report.

"When we do not grant even the basics needed for survival, how then can we honestly criticize the recipients of such assistance for lack of effort or decry behaviours that offer relief from such a miserable existence?" says the report by the National Council of Welfare. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Canadian companies not likely to bribe, survey finds

BUSINESS Companies based in Canada are the least likely to pay bribes to win business in other countries, according to a survey of international senior business executives.

Anti-corruption organization Transparency International, which published the survey yesterday, said the results showed that companies based in emerging markets were the most likely to engage in bribery when doing business abroad.

Companies based in Belgium rated alongside Canada. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The results

- Russian corporations were deemed most likely to accept payoffs.
- The survey asked 2,742 executives from 26 countries.

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Analysts say airport incursions might inspire copycat tactics
Protesters have stormed the tarmac at one of Britain's busiest airports, shut down two airports in Thailand and invaded a runway in Athens — and some experts see a worrisome pattern. In the post 9/11 era, protests at sensitive international airports have become an effective way to rattle nerves and publicize causes. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

World

Rice, Clinton break bread

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and designated successor Hillary Clinton enjoyed a private two-hour catered meal at Rice's apartment in Washington Monday night, according to State Department spokesman Sean McCormack. Aside from the food, he said they chewed over foreign policy issues and challenges that will face the new Barack Obama administration. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Violence continues to rock Greek cities

RIOTS Masked youths and looters marauded through Greek cities for a fourth night yesterday, in an explosion of rage triggered by the police shooting of a teenager that has unleashed the most violent riots in a quarter century.

The nightly scenes of burning street barricades, looted stores and overturned cars have threatened to topple the country's unpopular conservative government.

Police fired tear gas at protesters yesterday following the funeral of 15-year-old Alexandros Grigoropoulos, who was laid to rest in an Athens burial attended by 6,000 people.

The rioting — which has engulfed cities from Thessaloniki in the north to the holiday island of Corfu and Crete in the south — threatens Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis, who already faced growing dissatisfaction over financial and social reforms.

> **"The government cannot handle this crisis and has lost the trust of the Greek people. The best thing it can do is resign."**
> George Papandreou

Opposition Socialist Leader George Papandreou called for early elections, charging the conservatives were incapable of defending the public from rioters.

"The government cannot handle this crisis and has lost the trust of the Greek people," Papandreou said. "The best thing it can do is resign and let the people find a solution ... We will protect the public."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Indian police to question suspect in terrorist attack

MUMBAI Indian police say they will question a man they have had in custody since February, believing he may have ties to last month's Mumbai terrorist attack.

Mumbai police officer Rakesh Maria says the man, identified only as Sabauddin, will be brought to Mumbai from a jail in northern India.

Maria says Sabauddin was arrested along with an Indian national, Faheem Ansari, in February in north India carrying hand-drawn sketches of hotels, the train terminal and other sites in Mumbai that were later attacked.

Maria gave no other information on Sabauddin, including his nationality.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Suspects ID'd

- Earlier, officer Rakesh Maria said police had identified the nine suspected Islamic militants killed during the siege and uncovered new details about them, including their hometowns in Pakistan.

Governor arrested for trying to sell Obama's Senate seat

Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich was arrested yesterday on charges he brazenly conspired to sell or trade president-elect Barack Obama's vacant Senate seat to the highest bidder as part of what federal prosecutors called a "political corruption crime spree."

M. SPENCER GREEN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich, seen in this August 2008 photo, was arrested yesterday by authorities.

Prosecutors did not accuse Obama himself of any wrongdoing. Obama said he had no contact with the governor or his office on the matter.

The Democrat was also charged with illegally threatening to withhold state assistance to Tribune Co., the owner of the Chicago Tribune, in an attempt to strong-arm the newspaper into firing editorial writers who had criticized him.

The 51-year-old was also accused of engaging in pay-to-play politics — that is, doling out jobs, contracts and appointments in return for campaign contributions.

"We were in the middle of a corruption crime spree, and we wanted to stop it," U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald said, calling the charges against Blagojevich "a truly new low." He added: "The conduct would make Lincoln roll over in his grave."

Federal investigators bugged the governor's campaign offices and tapped his home phone, capturing conversations laced with profanity and tough-guy talk from the governor.

The FBI said in court papers that the governor was overheard on wiretaps over the last month conspiring to sell the Senate seat for campaign cash or plum jobs for himself or his wife, Patti, a real estate agent. He spoke of landing a job with a non-profit foundation or a union-affiliated group, and even held out the possibility of a cabinet appointment or ambassadorship for himself.

Blagojevich faces two counts: Conspiracy to commit fraud, which carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison, and solicitation to commit bribery, which is punishable by up to 10 years.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Vessels must slow down in U.S. waters for North Atlantic right whales

Endangered North Atlantic right whales are getting precedent-setting protections in their journey to Canadian waters under new U.S. legislation. New federal rules that take effect this week will force ships 19 metres or longer to slow down as they pass through areas along the eastern seaboard that are part of the whales' migratory route. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cancer top killer by 2010: WHO

Cancer will overtake heart disease as the world's top killer by 2010, part of a trend that should more than double global cancer cases and deaths by 2030, international health experts reported yesterday.

Rising tobacco use in developing countries is believed to be a huge reason for the shift, particularly in China and India, where 40 per cent of the world's smokers now live. So is the better diagnosing of cancer.

Global cancer deaths are expected to reach seven million this year, according to the new report by the World Health Organization.

An annual rise of 1 per cent in cases and deaths is expected — with even larger increases in China, Russia and India. That means new cancer cases will likely mushroom to 27 million annually by 2030, with deaths eventually hitting 17 million.

Underlying all this is an expected expansion of the world's population — there will be more people around to get cancer.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Appealing to the U.S. government

- The WHO, American Cancer Society and various other organizations are issuing a call to action, asking the U.S. government to help fund cervical cancer vaccinations and to ratify an international tobacco control treaty.

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Auto plan still being hammered out in U.S.

WASHINGTON Tense talks are continuing on financial aid for the auto industry as the White House pushes for tougher consequences than congressional Democrats want to see if the carmakers fail to bring costs under control.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid said yesterday that Congress might act on an auto bailout as early as the end of the day.

The administration of U.S. President George W. Bush favours empowering a "car czar" envisioned in the proposed legislation to force the companies into bankruptcy if they don't do enough to cut labour costs, production capacity and debt.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said she supports the concept of a federal overseer of any automaker rescue plan, saying she lacks confidence the heads of the car companies can be "left to their own devices."

Pelosi appeared on morning television yesterday after a night of intense Capitol Hill discussions aimed at narrowing the differences over a $15-billion US bill that would rush short-term loans to the industry. The plan would require that the Detroit Three reinvent themselves — and repay the government if they don't.

Pelosi said taxpayers should consider it "a second chance" rather than a bailout.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Union demand

- The head of the United Auto Workers, Ron Gettelfinger, signalled the union might demand an equity stake in General Motors Corp. if workers are asked to give up more.

Republican senator loses appeal in airport sex sting

COURT Idaho Senator Larry Craig has lost his latest attempt to withdraw his guilty plea in the Minneapolis airport men's room sex sting that effectively ended his Senate career.

A three-judge panel of the Minnesota Court of Appeals yesterday rejected the Republican's bid to toss out his disorderly conduct conviction.

Craig still has the option of appealing to the Minnesota Supreme Court.

Craig was arrested June 11, 2007, by an undercover police officer who was conducting a sting operation against men cruising for gay sex at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport.

He quietly pleaded guilty to the misdemeanour and paid a fine, but changed his mind after word of his arrest became public that August.

Craig insisted he was innocent and said he was not gay. His lawyer argued that the police officer misconstrued Craig's foot-tapping, hand movements and other conduct.

But the case brought widespread ridicule and effectively ended his political career.

The Senate Ethics Committee said in February that Craig had brought discredit on the Senate.

The committee members said they believed Craig's attempt to withdraw his plea was just an effort to evade the legal consequences of his own actions.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Replacement

- Senator Larry Craig did not seek a fourth term in last month's U.S. election. He will be replaced in January by Idaho Lt.-Gov. Jim Risch, also a Republican.

Reward offered for help in Harry Winston jewel theft in Paris
A reward of up to $1 million US has been put up for information leading to the recovery of more than $100 million in stolen jewelry. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Russians bid farewell to Patriarch Alexy II

In a sombre service that echoed with ancient chants, Russia paid final tribute yesterday to Patriarch Alexy II, who rebuilt the dominant Orthodox Church after 70 years of Communist repression.

White-robed priests, government officials and two descendants of the last czar stood shoulder-to-shoulder in the crowd that thronged the soaring Christ the Saviour Cathedral for a six-hour service for Alexy, who died Friday at age 79. He was later buried at the Epiphany Cathedral across town.

"We are burying ... a beautiful holy fruit grown by our Russian church."
Dmitry Smirnov

"We are burying a great man, a great son of our nation, a beautiful holy fruit grown by our Russian church," said Rev. Dmitry Smirnov, a Moscow archpriest.

Chosen as patriarch in 1990 a year before the Soviet breakup, Alexy turned his church into the world's largest and richest Orthodox denomination — a remarkably successful effort to revive the enormous power the institution wielded before the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution.

Alexy also renewed the church's historically close ties with the Kremlin, earning the church considerable financial support and privileges.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Death toll rises to 4 in military jet crash

CALIFORNIA Authorities say the death toll from a military jet crash in a San Diego neighbourhood stands at four after a toddler's body was found.

The fire department says says the body of 15-month-old Grace Yoon was found yesterday in the home where three other family members died. According to a local reverend, the other victims are Young Mi Yoon; her two-month-old daughter, Rachel; and her mother, Suk Im Kim.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Comment & Views

Let's retire the Queen

Canada needs to grow up and end an outdated practice

TheWestView

Paul Sullivan
Journalist & media consultant

With apologies to Paul McCartney ... Her Majesty's a pretty nice girl, but why is she running my country?

As I've watched the remarkable events of the past week unfold, the most remarkable was the spectacle of Stephen Harper, hat in hand, tugging his forelock in the general direction of Michaëlle Jean, Mrs. Windsor's representative in Ottawa.

You're familiar with Mrs. Windsor? That nice old lady in London with the corgis and the celebrity grandchildren? Her Majesty?

There hasn't been a lot of talk about the suitability of that exchange; I guess because most of us are relieved that Ms. Jean, a former Radio-Canada reporter with not one iota of experience in governance, just granted the prime minister's wish, and Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition doesn't get to run the country, at least not yet.

But why do Mrs. Windsor and her envoy still run the country? Until last week, they have been little more than glorified lawn ornaments. Inviting them to your charity garden party adds instant class. But what if Ms. Jean, who probably doesn't like Mr. Harper any more than Mr. Harper likes her, had decided to give the reins of power to Stéphane Dion and the balance of power to Chief Blochead Gilles Duceppe?

For one thing, we'd hear a lot more squawking about how it's time to end this outdated ridiculous subservience to Prince Charles' Mom. Instead, a grateful nation has decided to put aside any qualms about Ms. Jean, her former French citizenship, her rumoured separatist leanings, her absurd appointment as the Queen's representative, never mind the innate, fundamental absurdity of the Queen herself.

"We should send Ms. Jean back to Radio-Canada, tell Mrs. Windsor that it's time to retire as the Queen of Canada; thanks for the memories."

So what happens in January if Her Majesty's Loyal Etc. try to stick it to Stephen one more time? Back he goes, gripping his forelock, to visit Ms. Jean, and she informs him that "we are not amused," and turns the government over to Michael or Rae and their little dog Jack? She can do that! She's Mrs. Windsor's envoy. Mrs. Windsor runs the country!

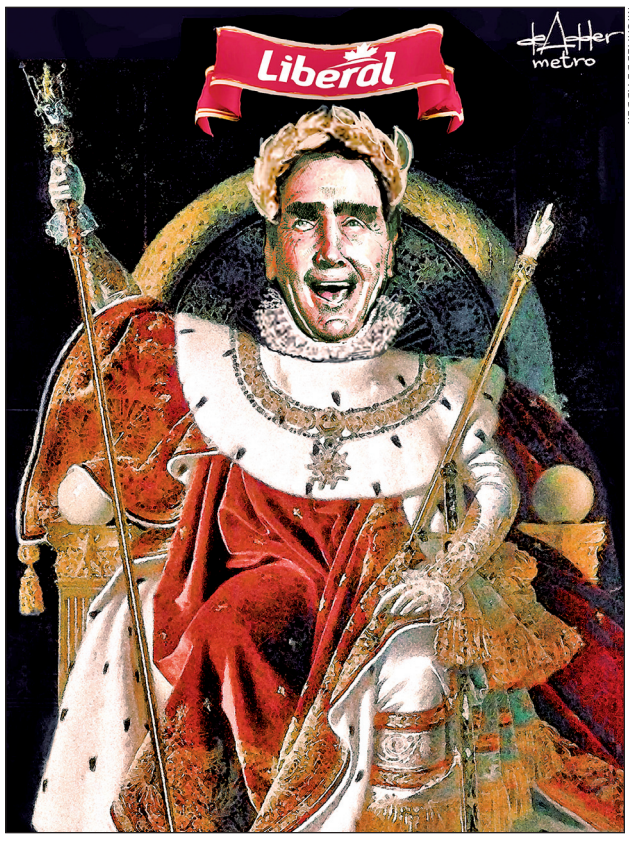
I simply can't believe we're still letting this happen. Here's what we need to do. Immediately, as a nation, we should grow up.

Then, we should send Ms. Jean back to Radio-Canada, tell Mrs. Windsor that it's time to retire as the Queen of Canada; thanks for the memories. Then we elect a president at large (as everyone mistakenly believes they vote for the prime minister anyway), while preserving the parliamentary democracy that we've come to know and love.

We do this through proportional representation, so we get the parties and the policies we want exactly in proportion to the popular vote. Now that's democracy.

And God Save Mrs. Windsor for another day.

Paul Sullivan is a Vancouver-based journalist and owner of Sullivan Media Consulting.



MICHAEL DE ADDER

Word on the street: What's the best holiday gift you've ever received?

Summer Hodder
age 28, Toronto
A: I got a handmade book of memories, quotes and photos that I otherwise wouldn't have had.

Mario Gagnon
age 14, Moncton
A: A video camera. My friends and I love to make movies and then post them on the Internet.

Brian Stephenson
age 62, Toronto
A: Really the best gift I could ever get is the chance to spend Christmas with my family.

Terence Doerksen
age 30, Edmonton
A: I got these two big castles as a kid and I spent all Christmas with my dad putting everything together.

Valerie Nolet
age 21, Ottawa
A: My car. I got it from my parents. They paid for half and I paid for the other half of it.

Jen Seymour
age 21, Abbotsford
A: An engagement ring. We were in Whistler on Christmas Eve in a chocolate shop and it was snowing.

Letters

Election worth the price tag

At this point the Liberal-NDP coalition will try to take power, almost certainly no matter what, on the principle that "they can." There are no attempts to engage in dialogue with the Tories, no attempt to compromise.

If this is allowed to proceed, every election which fails to give one party a majority will become a free-for-all, as all the parties try to form coalitions.

Let's go to the polls and let the people have their say — Tory or a Liberal-NDP-Bloc government. The cost of another election is small for getting a government which everyone will agree was actually elected by the people.

DAMIAN KANAREK, TORONTO

Thank goodness for women's voices on politics

Until recently, it was unusual to see women writing in the "comments" section under regional and national media print and online political stories. That has changed, and now we see some thoughtful comments from women in among mostly male comments.

I say thank goodness. It's about time that women spoke up — after all they are about 50 per cent of eligible voters.

Too many women stayed away from the polls this last October election — I don't expect that to happen in those numbers next election as women realize they can make a difference.

DON WILSON, MASSTOWN, N.S.

Will MPs prorogue pay?

As a gesture to help the economy, will the members of Parliament be proroguing their salaries during their extended leave of absence?

BERNIE MERRETT, TORONTO

Kudos to editorial cartoonist

I have particularly enjoyed the small editorial cartoons in Metro.

Editorial cartoonists have a unique talent of highlighting the crux of the issue and giving readers a better appreciation and understanding of the issue. Michael de Adder's cartoons are clean and not cluttered. I put him in the class of Aislin (Montreal Gazette), Norris and Peterson. His cartoons are an invaluable addition to Metro and provide interesting and stimulating inclusion in our household.

Keep up the good work.

FRANKLIN CHOW, OTTAWA

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Canadian book industry feeling economic pressure
The Canadian book business, largely considered recession-proof, is feeling the pinch of an economic slowdown but industry players believe the pain will be less than what its peers in the United States are experiencing. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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EDITOR: FERMIN DESOUZA, FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

Blank CD levy goes up 40 per cent

BACKUP The levy on blank CDs and MiniDiscs that allows Canadians to make a legal backup of their music is going up by almost 40 per cent. It's the first increase since 2001.

The Private Copying Tariff for this year and next is going up to 29 cents per disc from 21 cents per disc. The levy rate on audio cassettes remains at 24 cents per tape. The Canadian Private Copying Collective had also wanted tariffs on digital memory cards and digital audio recorders and MP3 players.

It's estimated that the levy brings in about $30 million a year, of which about two-thirds goes to the Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada; the Canadian Mechanical Reproduction Rights Agency; and the Society for Reproduction Rights of Authors, Composers and Publishers in Canada for eligible authors. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada, EU reach civil aviation pact

TRAVEL The European Union and Canada have reached a landmark deal to open up their air services markets to each other.

The first phase of the deal is expected to come into force in the first half of 2009 that will allow airlines in the European Union bloc and Canada to operate direct flights.

It removes restrictions on routes, prices and the number of flights allowed between the two sides. THE CANADIAN PRESS

CAW rejects pay cuts

Union boss says workers already competitive

The Canadian Auto Workers is insisting the union doesn't need to cut wages and benefits to become "part of the solution" for massive public aid to the three reeling automakers because employees are already competitive.

"We are already part of the solution."
Ken Lewenza

Union president Ken Lewenza said he told federal Industry Minister Tony Clement yesterday that current pay for workers at General Motors, Ford and Chrysler would not scare away future auto investment or jeopardize existing assembly plants.

Last week, the automakers made submissions seeking $6 billion in government aid in the form of loans, loan guarantees and lines of credit.

At the meeting, Lewenza said he informed Clement that this spring, the union negotiated savings of between $750 million and $900 million for the three automakers in contracts during the next three years to help them cope with looming financial problems. "We are already part of the solution," he said.

Under those contracts, production technicians currently earn about $33.90 per hour and receive numerous benefits. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Business in brief

TELECOM Canada's telecommunications industry is growing at its slowest pace in more than a decade, as economic uncertainty affects consumer spending on its services, the Conference Board of Canada says. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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It contains scientifically calculated proportions of extracts of fenugreek seeds, saw palmetto berries and flax lignans. Each are known to possess an inhibitor of the enzyme responsible for causing male or female pattern baldness. It also contains a mixture of B vitamins, folate and biotin to help metabolize these herbal extracts so that they are more bio-available, and to support the growth of strong and healthy hair.

What causes hereditary hair loss?

Each hair grows from a pocket in the skin called the hair follicle. During its growing phase, the follicle has a bulb-shaped bottom, the center of which is called the dermal papilla. The papilla is fed by very small blood vessels, which bring it food & oxygen and remove wastes. The papilla is highly sensitive to hormones and chemicals secreted by the body *(or ingested as a medicine)* which impacts hair growth.

It is believed that some individuals have a genetic predisposition to a receding hairline *(most common in men)* or hair/follicle thinning over larger areas of scalp *(more common in women)*. These conditions result from hormonal changes caused by an enzyme in the dermal papilla called 5-alpha-reductase. This enzyme breaks down the hormone testosterone into dihydrotestosterone *(DHT)*.

Over a period of time, an over abundance of DHT causes the hair follicle to degrade and shortens the active phase of the hair, eventually leading to thinner hair and eventual hair loss.

How does BIO-FEN PLUS™ *work?*

Specific compounds within the herbal extracts inhibit the 5-alpha-reductase *(and therefore reduce DHT)* to prevent or slow down the rate of hair loss. This process is the principle by which the prescription drugs such as Propecia *(finasteride)* work. However, BIO-FEN PLUS™ also contains additional compounds which remove excess cholesterol and testosterone – the building blocks of DHT.

BIO-FEN PLUS™ also contains vitamins to increase blood flow to the small capillaries that feed the hair roots, to deliver the active herbal compounds and remove waste. **Therefore, BIO-FEN PLUS™ provides a natural, safer alternative to expensive drugs, and/or expensive & painful hair transplants.** As with the prescription alternatives, results vary from person to person, and no one product will work for everyone.

How long must I use BIO-FEN PLUS™ *?*

BIO-FEN PLUS™ capsules are usually effective at stopping hair loss within the first two months. However, since healthy hair grows only about 1 cm each month, it may take up to three months before you notice that hair growth is increased or further hair loss is stopped.

Anyone experiencing new growth will see it within four to six months. Once results become apparent, some users are able to reduce their BIO-FEN PLUS™ supplement dose to one capsule every second or every third day. Some clients will continue to take BIO-FEN PLUS™ daily. Once you stop completely, however, your hair growth pattern will slowly go back to the point where you started.

How safe is BIO-FEN PLUS™ *?*

The ingredient combination in BIO-FEN PLUS™ is generally safe for most adults. However, the following cautions are advised:

Folic acid: Consult a health care practitioner if you are uncertain whether or not you are taking adequate vitamin B12, as folate supplementation can mask a Vitamin B12 deficiency.

Vitamin B3: Consult a health care practitioner prior to use if you have impaired liver function.

Vitamin B6: Consult a health care practitioner prior to use if you are taking levodopa.

What is the quality of BIO-FEN PLUS™ *?*

BIO-FEN PLUS™ is manufactured in Canada according to a quality assurance program called Good Manufacturing Practices *(GMP)*. This ensures that the ingredients are tested for their level of quality, potency & purity, prior to production and again prior to sale.

See our website to locate your nearest Health Food Store or Pharmacy that offers BIO-FEN PLUS™ and other quality products from Hair Grow Technology. If you have any questions or comments about our products that target hair loss and support the growth of strong, healthy hair, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Each BIO-FEN PLUS™ *capsule contains (mg/capsule):*

Fenugreek *(Trigonella feonum graecum)* seed extract 4:1	260 mg
Saw palmetto berry extract contains 45% powder, esters & sterols	160 mg
Flax lignans, standardized to 20% secoisolariciresinol diglucoside *(SDG)*	100 mg
D-calcium pantothenate *(Vitamin B5)*	10.40 mg
Niacinamide *(Vitamin B3)*	10.25 mg
Pyridoxine HCl *(Vitamin B6)*	2.00 mg
Riboflavin *(Vitamin B2)*	1.58 mg
Folic acid	0.095 mg
Biotin	400 mcg

Non-medicinal ingredients: inert microcrystalline cellulose and vegetable-based magnesium stearate in a veggie-based capsule.

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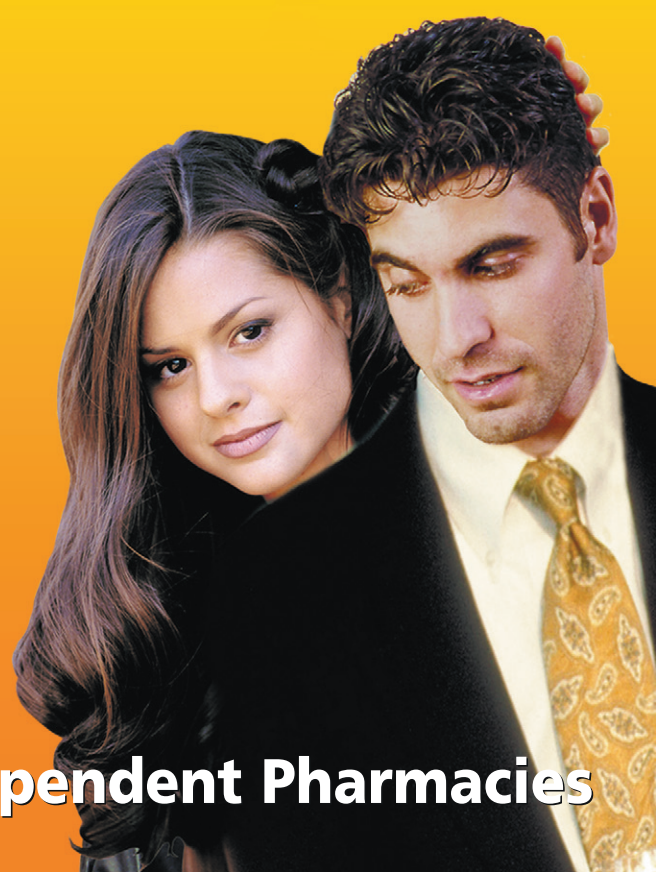

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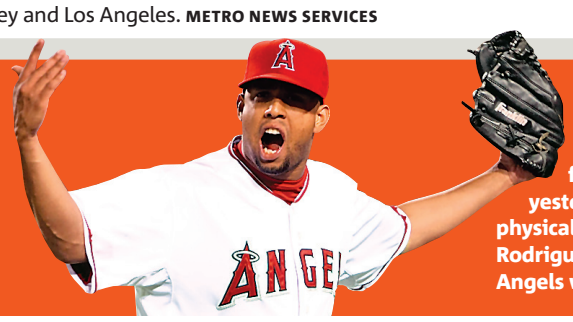
Recession hits NFL
The NFL announced yesterday that it is cutting more than 10 per cent of its staff in response to the downturn in the U.S. economy. The league is eliminating about 150 of its staff of 1,100 in New York, New Jersey and Los Angeles. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Sports



K-Rod to Mets

The New York Mets have agreed to a three-year deal with free-agent closer Francisco Rodriguez, ESPN reported yesterday. Rodriguez's deal, worth $37 million US, is pending a physical, which the New York Post reports will take place today. Rodriguez broke the Major League saves record last season for the Angels with 62. METRO NEWS SERVICES

SPORTS@METRONEWS.CA

King James holds court

Triano still winless as Raps blown out in Cleveland

NBA RESULT

Cavaliers 114 **Raptors** 94

VS

THE SKINNY: LeBron James scored 31 points and set the team record for steals, Zydrunas Ilgauskas became the Cavaliers' career leader in rebounds, and Cleveland moved to 12-0 at home with a 20-point victory over the Raptors last night.

CAVS UNSTOPPABLE? In winning their ninth straight by at least 12 points, the Cavaliers, now 17-1 since Nov. 3, are the first team in NBA history to win nine consecutive games in a single season so handily. Cleveland's record now sits at 18-3.

MARK DUNCAN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LeBron James waves to the crowd after breaking the Cavaliers' career steals mark last night. James scored 31 points as Cleveland beat Toronto 114-94.

BOSH NOT A FACTOR: Chris Bosh was held to nine points on 4-of-11 shooting, his worst game since the 94-87 loss in Boston on Nov. 10.

THE BAD NEWS: The Raptors have now lost five straight, four of which were blowouts, and are winless in three games under Jay Triano.

THE UGLY NEWS: Jermaine O'Neal turned the ball over six times and was held to eight points and four rebounds.

SOME GOOD NEWS: Joey Graham continues to contribute, scoring in double digits for the fourth straight game.

THE NEXT GAME: Back at home tonight against the Pacers, as T.J. Ford returns to Toronto (7 p.m., The Score, FAN 590). Indiana is on a losing streak of its own, having dropped three in a row.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/METRO NEWS SERVICES

Petitclerc takes Lou Marsh Trophy

After winning five gold medals at the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Games, wheelchair racer Chantal Petitclerc was awarded the Lou Marsh Trophy yesterday as Canada's top athlete this year.

A panel made up of sports journalists and luminaries from around the country judges the award, named for the former Toronto Star sports editor. This year, former Olympic rower and 1991 Lou Marsh winner Silken Laumann headed the awards committee.

After her last win in Beijing, her coach, Peter Eriksson, told reporters, "I would say she is one of the greatest Canadian athletes, period."

Competing at Beijing in the T54 class for athletes with different levels of spinal cord injuries and amputations, she won the 200- and 800-metre races within 90 minutes of each other, setting two world records.

"I told my coach, never again. This was a stressful day," she said after her double-gold day.

She also won the 400 in record time and the 100 before finishing up in the 1,500 with a win by more than one second over her closest rival.

Petitclerc was injured as a teenager in Saint-Marc-des-Carrieres, a village between Quebec City and Trois Rivieres. She and a friend were trying to fashion an old barn door into a bike ramp. But as they tried to prop it up, it fell on Petitclerc causing her injury.

Overall, Petitclerc won 14 golds and 21 total medals over five Paralympic games.

She holds four world records and adds the Lou Marsh to her many other honours, including Maclean's magazine's Canadian of the Year in 2004. Petitclerc joins Rick Hansen as one of two wheelchair athletes to win the Lou Marsh Trophy. She is the 72nd recipient overall. This year's 22 Lou Marsh finalists included gold-medal show jumper Eric Lamaze, Deportivo la Coruna soccer star Julian de Guzman, NBA standout Steve Nash and world figure skating champion Jeffrey Buttle.

Last year's winner was Pittsburgh Penguins centre Sidney Crosby.

TORSTAR NEWS SERV-

Chantal Petitclerc won five gold medals at this year's Paralympics in Beijing.

Recent winners
Lou Marsh Trophy

- 2008: Chantal Petitclerc
- 2007: Sidney Crosby
- 2006: Cindy Klassen
- 2005: Steve Nash
- 2004: Adam van Koeverden
- 2003: Mike Weir
- 2002: Catriona Le May Doan

Sports in brief

MLB According to ESPN, New York Yankees general manager Brian Cashman met with A.J. Burnett's agents Monday and reportedly told them the Yankees would be willing to "do better" than the four-year, $60-million US contract offer the Atlanta Braves made to the former Blue Jay. The story comes on the heels of reports that fellow free agent pitcher C.C. Sabathia has expressed interest in playing for the Los Angeles Dodgers. The Yankees' six-year, $140-million offer to Sabathia has been on the table for nearly four weeks, and it is believed Sabathia would prefer to play for a team near his home in his native California.

Burnett

METRO NEWS SERVICES

GOLF Spanish golf great Seve Ballesteros was released from hospital yesterday, more than two months after undergoing brain surgery to remove a malignant tumour. The 51-year-old will continue to be treated as an outpatient, Madrid's La Paz hospital said in a statement.

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Crosby leapfrogs Habs

Sidney Crosby's 598,418 votes as of yesterday morning hopped him over Montreal's Alex Kovalev and Saku Koivu into the top spot among Eastern Conference forwards in NHL all-star voting. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Melrose lets fly on Lightning

NHL While a guest on the FAN 590 yesterday, ex-Tampa Bay Lightning coach Barry Melrose sounded off on his former club, saying that during his short tenure he dealt with constant interference from people in the organization.

Melrose

"I had guys in Tampa who wanted to run the team and I wouldn't let them. I was hired to coach and I coached," Melrose said.

"Every day was a constant battle."

"I hope Tampa Bay doesn't win a game in the next year."
Barry Melrose

Melrose was fired less than a month ago, only 16 games into the season. In the 11 games they have played since, Tampa Bay has only won once. When asked if that made him happy, he said, "yeah it does, and any coach who tells you otherwise is a liar," Melrose told the FAN. "I hope Tampa Bay doesn't win a game in the next year." Melrose also criticized Lightning forward Steven Stamkos, the first pick in the 2008 draft. "Steven is not ready for the NHL," Melrose said. "Right now he's just not strong enough physically to play against defencemen who are 6'3" or 6'4" that can skate as good as him."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Boyle glad to escape Lightning nightmare

MATTHEW WUEST
matthew.wuest@metronews.ca

Dan Boyle can't hide the hint of satisfaction he gets out of seeing the Tampa Bay Lightning in the NHL basement.

"I'm only human, right?" Boyle joked. "But to see what has happened out there, it's probably more sad than anything for me because I still think it's a great place to play and it's very unfortunate all this stuff is going on."

The 32-year-old defenceman didn't realize it at the time, but the Lightning gave him the equivalent of a get-out-of-jail free card when it kicked him to the curb in July after new owners Oren Koules and Len Barrie took over.

Boyle, who was asked to waive the no-trade clause before the ink had dried on his new six-year contract, ended up being dealt to the San Jose Sharks. While the Koules-Barrie overhaul has Tampa Bay (6-13-8) bumbling in controversy and incompetence, Boyle and the Sharks (22-3-2) are the NHL's best team.

"I was planning to be (in Tampa Bay) for a while, but having seen the way some guys have been treated there and what's gone on so far, and on top of that, how I've been treated here, I have no regrets whatsoever," Boyle said.

The 5-foot-11, 190-pounder from Ottawa has put the Lightning debacle behind him, not to mention a serious wrist injury that sidelined him for half of last season.

Boyle, who is second among NHL blue-liners with 10 goals and 14 assists for 24 points in 25 games, is hearing whispers he could be a Norris Trophy candidate if he keeps it up.

Although Boyle won a Stanley Cup with the Lightning in 2004, he calls the Sharks the "best team I've been on." But he is also aware the Sharks have been perennial underachievers in the post-season and wants to help erase that label.

"Playoff hockey, as we all know, is totally different," Boyle said. "We had a pretty good team in '04. We stepped it up to the next level in the playoffs. Until we get there, until we do that with the Sharks, it remains to be seen."

GETTY IMAGES

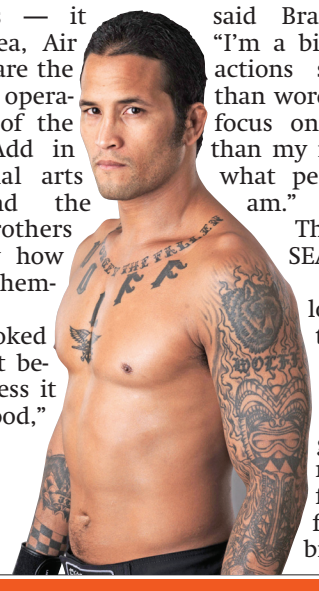
The Sharks' Dan Boyle is currently second among NHL defenceman in scoring with 24 points.

UFC may come easy after serving as a U.S. Navy SEAL

Talk about double trouble. Brandon Wolff is a former Navy SEAL turned mixed martial arts fighter — with a twin brother who has gone down exactly the same career path.

Wolff (7-2) steps into the cage tonight to make his UFC debut against Ben Saunders on the Fight for the Troops card in North Carolina.

Brother Brenton Wolff — 3-0 as a pro and "one of my best training partners" — has done his part to help Brandon prepare for the show (9 p.m., Rogers Sportsnet).



Brandon Wolff makes his UFC debut tonight.

The SEALs — it stands for Sea, Air and Land — are the elite special operations forces of the U.S. Navy. Add in mixed martial arts training and the Wolff brothers clearly know how to handle themselves.

"I never looked at it like that before but I guess it sounds good," said Brandon Wolff. "I'm a big believer in actions speak larger than words. So I try to focus on that rather than my reputation or what people think I am."

That is the SEAL creed.

Wolff can look forward to a supportive crowd today. The fight card was organized to raise funds for a hospital for traumatic brain injuries for the U.S. military and the stands are expected to be filled with thousands of soldiers from nearby Fort Bragg.

The main event features welterweights Josh Koscheck and Japan's Yoshiyuki Yoshida while Montreal welterweight Jonathan (The Road Warrior) Goulet faces Mike (Quick) Swick in the co-main event.

Apart from Wolff, other military veterans on the card are former marine Luigi Fioravanti and former U.S. navy vets Steve Bruno, Tim Credeur, and Dale Hartt. The UFC last held a military-themed show in December 2006, from the Marine Corps Air Station Miramar outside of San Diego.

The SEALs' rite of passage includes a "Hell Week" during BUD/S (Basic Underwater Demolition School/Seal) that features five and a half days of continuous training on less than four hours of sleep. On average, only a quarter of trainees make it through Hell Week.

"It was probably one of the most challenging things that I've been through," said Wolff.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Washington 107 Detroit 94
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Indiana at **TORONTO**
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Memphis at Oklahoma City
Cleveland at Philadelphia
Charlotte at New Orleans
Atlanta at San Antonio
Minnesota at Denver
Phoenix at L.A. Lakers
Milwaukee at Golden State

NHL

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Montreal 4 Calgary 1
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Los Angeles at Colorado

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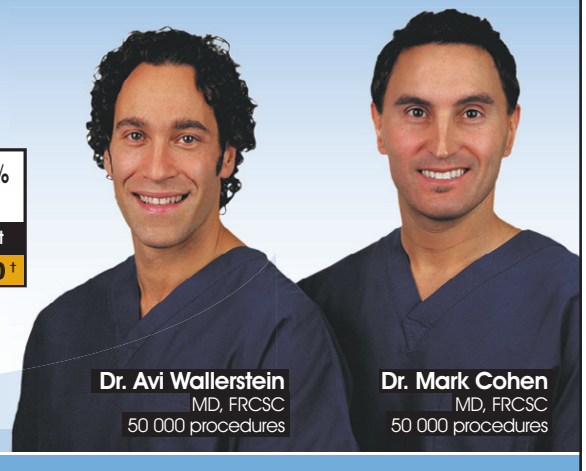

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McDyess officially rejoins Pistons
Antonio McDyess has re-signed with the Detroit Piston a month after being dealt to Denver. The Nuggets waived McDyess and he had to wait 30 days before rejoining Detroit. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Chelsea, Roma move on

Chelsea scraped through to the second round of the Champions League alongside AS Roma and Panathinaikos after beating CFR Cluj 2-1 yesterday.

GREGORIO BORGIA/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AS Roma's Simone Perrotta, left, controls the ball in midair as Bordeaux's Frank Jurietti looks on during Champions League action in Rome yesterday.

Cluj, with Canadian international goalkeeper Lars Hirschfeld on the bench, had no hope of a place in the next round but looked likely to deny Chelsea the victory it needed to be sure of advancing until last season's runner-up brought on star striker Didier Drogba as a late substitute.

Any fears Chelsea fans had of their team falling in the first round were eased when Matteo Brighi scored in the 61st minute to put Roma ahead against Bordeaux — and ended when Drogba struck in the 71st to give the Blues victory.

"If we want to go all the way again we have to really up our game," Chelsea captain John Terry said. "Things haven't been clicking."

Roma eventually won 2-0 to finish as Group A winner ahead of Chelsea, with Bordeaux third. Panathinaikos secured first place in Group B after a 1-0 win over Anorthosis Famagusta to complete the second-round lineup. Thirteen of the 16 qualifiers were settled before this week's final group matches.

Barcelona won Group C despite losing 3-2 to visiting Shakhtar Donetsk, which finished third to qualify for a consolation place in the second-tier UEFA Cup, while Liverpool topped Group D with a 3-1 win at PSV Eindhoven.

Bordeaux needed to win at Roma to have any chance of finishing in the top two places and held out until Brighi scored from a cross by Simone Perrotta. Perrotta crossed from the right and Brighi took one touch before scoring from close range. That left Bordeaux needing two goals and, after Yoann Gourcuff had an effort for the French team, Roma took advantage of the space left at the back. Francesco Totti made it 2-0 in the 79th minute with a low shot past goalkeeper Ulrich Rame from Jeremy Menez's pass.

Roma ended the group with 12 points, one more than Chelsea and five more than Bordeaux. Cluj was a distant last with just four.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Two CISers named to Shrine Game

FOOTBALL Canadian university football players Simeon Rottier and Etienne Legare were named yesterday to participate in the East-West Shrine game next month in Houston.

Rottier, an offensive lineman with the Alberta Golden Bears, is rated as the top CIS prospect for the 2009 CFL Canadian college draft, is the fourth Golden Bear selected to play in the game but first since Carlo Panaro in 2001. Legare, a six-foot-four, 265-pound defensive lineman, is the third Laval player to be selected to play in the Shrine Game. The game features the top college football players in the U.S. and will be played Jan. 17. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kubek honoured with Frick award

BASEBALL Former Blue Jays and NBC announcer Tony Kubek was was honoured with the Baseball Hall of Fame's Ford C. Frick Award for broadcasting yesterday. Kubek appeared on Blue Jays telecasts from 1977-89, mostly alongside the late Don Chevrier.

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Automotive

A METRO JOINT VENTURE WITH: carguide magazine.com

EDITOR: KUMAR SAHA, KUMAR.SAHA@METRONEWS.CA

More zoom for Mazda3

Megaseller's feisty spirit alive and well in revamped model

JIM ROBINSON
for Metro Canada

Imagine you're in the shoes of Yoshiyuki Meada. He's the program manager for the 2010 Mazda3 and his job is to fix something that isn't broken.

One of every three Mazda vehicles sold around the world is a Mazda3. In Canada, the Mazda3 has improved in sales every year since it was introduced in 2003. In fact, 2008 will set another sales record, with people lining up to get a little Zoom Zoom in their lives.

What Maeda did was take the overall Mazda3 design concept and keep what was working and refine the rest.

To get everyone on board, he insisted on designers and engineers from Mazda's styling centres visiting each other's countries to talk about the car and learn what consumers in different parts of the world were thinking. His idea was to instill what Mazda calls "the emotion of motion."

Although the 2010 and the current Mazda3 have virtually the same dimensions, much attention was paid to aerodynamics with things like panels under the body to smooth air flow with the car's overall coefficient of drag going from 0.31 down to 0.29.

The biggest visual change is the much-enlarged grille. While it retains the Mazda five-point design, the wide mouth is there, not just for improved cooling, but is an actual part of the aero package.

The cabin area underwent not just a major redesign with liberal use of soft-touch materials, but the switch to what Mazda calls a "Zone Layout."

Instrumentation is placed in zones of importance based on eye movement, the primary ones being the large tachometer on the left and speedometer on the right in pods directly in the line of sight of the driver.

Housed in a second zone is a Multi Information Display (MID) on the centre of the dash and raised 100 mm higher and to the right of the main gauges. Positioned here, it is still in the line of sight. Depending on the model and options, it shows fuel consumption, distance and even a 3.5-inch colour navigation screen.

The four-door sedan tested here will arrive in the early spring along with a five-door Sportback hatch in three levels of trim: GX, GS and GT.

The 2.0-litre, DOHC inline four-cylinder engine that helped Mazda3 sales take off in 2008 is offered on the GX and GS.

It produces 148 hp and 135 lb/ft of torque and comes with as standard five-speed automatic transmission or optional five-speed automatic driving the front wheels.

Fuel consumption numbers for the 2.0-litre manual and automatic are 8.1/5.9L/100 km city/highway and 8.6L/5.9L/100 km city/highway respectively.

Pricing will not be announced until early in January but it should be pretty much the same as the 2009, with the base car starting around $17,000.

While my time with this car was brief, there's little doubt the Zoom Zoom spirit is alive and well in the 2010 Mazda3.

The 2010 Mazda3 sees a host of changes designed to improve on the outgoing model that was one of the most successful cars in the history of the company.

2010 Mazda3

Type: Compact sedan
Price: Not available
Engine: 2.0-litre DOHC inline four-cylinder; 2.5-litre DOHC inline four-cylinder
HP: 148-167

Highlights

- Front-wheel drive
- Fuel-efficient
- Aerodynamic

The interior of the 2010 Mazda3 is much changed including a second tier Multi Information Display (MID) at the top of the centre stack.

Winter safety on thin ice

SURVEY A recent GMAC Insurance survey in the U.S. revealed many drivers are stumped when it comes to proper safety procedures for winter weather driving.

Of the more than 5,000 licensed drivers surveyed across the nation, GMAC Insurance found several startling facts about driver competency during frozen or snowy conditions:

- 46 per cent were unaware their gas tank should be at least half full in order to continue providing heat in case of an emergency.
- 38 per cent didn't know driving while using cruise control, even in clear conditions, could be dangerous.
- 24 per cent did not know to turn the wheel in the direction of a skid.

One of the most significant misconceptions revealed in the survey was in regards to vehicles equipped with four-wheel drive. While four-wheel drive helps with traction in snow and ice, it does not replace good driving practices and taking the right precautions to stay safe.

Nevertheless, the GMAC Insurance survey showed that 70 per cent of drivers may exhibit a false sense of security when driving in snowy weather if their vehicle was equipped with four-wheel drive:

- 37 per cent feel they are less likely to have an accident.
- 21 per cent would drive during and right after a snowstorm.
- Nine per cent would feel superior to cars without four-wheel drive.
- Three per cent would drive faster than they would with only two-wheel drive.

Honda's got speed

JIM ROBINSON
for Metro Canada

2008 Honda S2000

Type: Performance roadster
Price: $50,600
Engine: 2.2-litre, DOHC inline four-cylinder engine
HP: 237

Highlights

- Rear-wheel drive
- Well-equipped
- Affordable roadster

The S2000 roadster retains much of what Honda has learned in Formula One and IndyCar racing for a superbly balanced roadster.

The "fun" of motoring can be seen by some (many) as frivolous in these days where gasoline prices here can be affected overnight by storms and rebellions half a world away.

To me, a car is a form of time machine that lets you cover distances in one hour that would have been mind-boggling to those living in 1808.

Driving is hard work, especially on super highways where the average speed is greater than that of airplanes a century ago. It takes concentration and, as we all know, it isn't cheap.

So that's why, in my opinion, occasionally enjoying the freedom a car can give is something to be savoured.

Which brings me around to the 2008 Honda S2000, a roadster you don't see a lot, but is considered by some as one of the great sportscars of the market and a sure collector car in the future.

When you look at it objectively, it's really a decade old and should be well behind current levels of performance and handling. But that's not the case.

I first saw what was to become the S2000 in 1995. It was a concept car called the SSM and about the size of a Mazda Miata. Frankly, it did not have the perky looks of the Miata so I dismissed it as just another exercise to gauge public reaction.

But Honda had other ideas. It re-emerged in 1999 to mark the 50th anniversary of the founding of the company that was taking place in 2000, thus the name. It also was the turning of the millennium, so Honda poured all its expertise into the car.

Incorporating the knowledge gained from Formula One and IndyCar, it had an engine of just 2.0-litres displacement with a carbon-fibre reinforced block and super-light forged-alloy pistons. Because this car was designed from the outset to rev to 9,000 rpm, special bearing alloys were used right out of IndyCar. Producing an amazing 240 hp, albeit at 8,600 rpm in the year 2000, the powerplant set new production car standards for volumetric efficiency.

Today the engine is larger at 2.2-litres producing 237 hp at 8,000 rpm with 162 lb/ft of torque. It remains today as the highest specific horsepower/litre normally aspirated production engine on the market. Fuel consumption is listed as 11.8L/100 km city and 8.4L/100 km highway.

"You can go from idle to 8,000 rpm in less than the time it takes to read this sentence."

The front suspension is racecar-derived double wishbones with shocks custom-fitted to soak up most road irregularities. This, along with a multi-link rear system that incorporates a TORSEN (TORque SENsing) differential, lets the suspension do the work. This allows the exceptionally rigid chassis to be free from classic cowl shake or axle tramping as the rear tires go over bumps or railroad tracks.

The front/rear weight distribution is a perfect 50/50 thanks to the engine sitting back so far back that it is almost mid-engined.

As you can guess, the S2000 is all about revs, or better yet, keeping them up.

This is a car you have to work with, not at, if you get my meaning. Because it breathes so easily, you have to get the revs up before it starts to make meaningful torque. You can go from idle to 8,000 rpm in less than the time it takes to read this sentence.

From launch, you ease in the clutch and you feed in the gas sharply then go for second ASAP. After that, the traction starts to kick in and you soon find the combination of a stiff platform, compliant suspension and ability to squirt and turn thanks to the 50/50 weight bias results in a very pointable car. In fact, the turning radius is a tight 5.7 metres.

The starting price is $50,600 and is handsomely equipped with full leather, air, cruise and a Maintenance Minder system that provides an odometer window readout of when to change oil, air filter, transmission fluid, timing belt, brake pads, and engine coolant, even spark plugs.

GM puts fuel cell vehicle to test

The goal of achieving sustainable mobility with zero emissions came a step closer in Berlin recently when GM announced the European part of its biggest ever test program for fuel cell vehicles.

Nine companies will be the first to operate GM's HydroGen4 zero-emission vehicles in the Berlin area as they go about their day-to-day business.

Nine German firms will test GM HydroGen4 zero-emission vehicles in the Berlin area under regular working conditions.

As an integral part of GM's overall advanced technology strategy towards further electrification of the car, this fourth generation fuel cell vehicle is the culmination of more than 10 years development work with hydrogen and fuel cell technology.

The HydroGen4 features improvements in everyday usability, such as performance and durability.

Globally, GM deploys more than 100 vehicles of this type in its Project Driveway testing program in the U.S., Japan, Korea, China, and Germany.

In the U.S., more than 100,000 people have applied as mainstream drivers for the market test. To date, 3,400 people have driven the vehicles and 30 families have used the vehicle on a daily basis over a period of around three months.

In total, the vehicles were driven almost 435,000 miles.

Feedback from these demonstration activities not only gives GM engineers essential validation data, but also provides a valuable insight into the likely ownership and driving experience of future customers.

The vehicles are equipped with a wireless data transfer system that assists engineers by uploading vehicle performance data to a company server.

Maintenance of the vehicles deployed in Berlin will be done at a regular Opel dealer equipped with the personnel and tools necessary for servicing fuel cell vehicles.

HydroGen4's fuel cell stack uses 440 single cells, which combine hydrogen and oxygen from the air to produce electricity, with water vapour as the only by-product, and therefore zero emissions.

The fuel cell stack provides the electric energy for the 73kW-synchronous electric motor, delivering acceleration of 0-100 km/h in around 12 seconds and a top speed of 100 mph.

The electric motor's instant torque characteristics also give the vehicle an excellent pick-up from low speed.

The HydroGen4 is fitted with a 1.8 kWh buffer battery to store energy from the vehicle's regenerative braking system and cover peak electrical loads.

The three carbon-fibre composite tanks hold 4.2 kg of hydrogen at a pressure of 700 bars, sufficient for an operating range of up to 320 kilometres.

HydroGen4 can start and run in sub-zero temperatures, a considerable advance over the previous generation technology and an important benefit for everyday usability.

It is designed to be as safe as conventional vehicles and includes unique hydrogen safety features in each of its major systems.

New generation MINI convertible to debut

LINEUP MINI Canada announced that a new generation MINI Convertible will join the lineup in spring of 2009. Reprising all of the cachet and appeal of the first generation MINI Convertible, the 2009 MINI Convertible inherits the DNA of the current family of MINI hatchback and Clubman models with an all-new body/chassis, drive train and updated interior.

The 2009 MINI Convertible inherits the DNA of the current family of MINI hatchback and Clubman models.

The 2009 MINI Cooper Convertible will emulate the crisp performance of its MINI Cooper hatchback and Clubman cousins, employing the 1.6-litre four cylinder engine with fully variable valve management and output of 118 hp at 6,000 rpm and 114 ft-lb of torque at 4,250 rpm. Capable of accelerating from 0-100 km/h in 9.6 seconds, the MINI Cooper Convertible equipped with manual transmission also achieves a remarkable fuel economy rating of 5.3 L/100km (highway).

While instantly recognizable as a MINI Convertible, the body of the 2009 MINI Convertible is all-new, integrated with a reinforced floorpan, A-pillars and side-sills. The fully crash-optimized structure, with passenger cell stiffness increased some 10 per cent over its predecessor, is also lighter by 10 kg.

The new MINI Convertible introduces a newly developed rollover safety system, a one-piece rollbar that, unlike the fixed configuration of its predecessor, is a "pop-up" design, which deploys electromechanically within 150 milliseconds.

Encompassing slightly larger side windows, the standard electrohydraulically-operated MINI Convertible roof features a glass rear window with integrated electric defroster, retracts in just 15 seconds and can be operated with the vehicle in motion up to a speed of 30 km/h.

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2008 Saturn ASTRA™ 5-door XR model shown

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2008 Saturn VUE® XR model shown

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HWY - 6.5 L/100 KM (43 MPG)° CITY - 9.6 L/100 KM (29 MPG)°

2008 Saturn AURA® XR model shown

Also available as a HYBRID

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2008 Saturn OUTLOOK® XR model shown

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Trucking with the times

JIM ROBINSON
for Metro Canada

With a striking new look, the 2009 Dodge Ram full-size pickup truck was reduced an average $2,200 across the board compared to the 2008 model and then was given an average of $2,500 in extra content.

Is Canada ready for a new, full-size pickup truck?

At the launch of the 2009 Dodge Ram, Chrysler Canada president, Reid Bigland, pointed out that despite fuel costs, Canadians are still buying 22,000 new big pickups every month.

Dodge, like all manufactures, saw the fuel price surge coming, perhaps not so suddenly, and designed the next generation Ram to meet (they hope) a sea change in how we work and travel.

The 2009 Ram offers 13 per cent more power, nine per cent more torque and a fuel efficiency increase of four per cent. Dodge also lowered the price over the 2008 Ram by an average $2,200 per model and then built in an average of $2,500 in added features.

The 2009 Dodge Ram will be offered in regular cab, Quad Cab and Crew Cab (new to RAM this year) configurations, with three box lengths: eight-foot (regular cab), six-foot-four-inches (regular cab and Quad Cab) and a new-for-2009 box length of five-foot-7-inches (Ram Crew 1500).

An innovation available on some models is the Ram Box that creates two lockable compartments in the unused bed walls.

Dodge says they all fit inside a standard-sized garage. The Ram Crew 1500 offers a claimed first-in-segment cargo management system called the RamBox. It is weatherproof, lockable, illuminated and has drainable storage compartments integrated into both fender sides for quick access and convenience. Each box holds up to five cases (120 cans) of 12-ounce beverages. Total capacity is 7.4 cubic feet, slightly more than the capacity of a 55-gallon drum.

There are three engine choices starting with a new-generation 5.7-litre Hemi that produces a claimed best-in-class 390 hp and 407 lb/ft of torque. The middle engine is a 4.7-litre V8 making 310 and 330 lb/ft of torque. Last is a 3.7-litre V6 generating 215 hp and 235 lb/ft of torque. The powertrains came further mixed and matched with four- and five-speed automatic transmissions; part-time and on-demand four-wheel-drive transfer cases; and four different axle ratios.

There are four trim levels offered: ST, SLT, Sport and Laramie. As you can imagine, there are also thousands of variations in pricing, but for just the rear-drive models they range from $25,995-$30,295 for the ST; SLT, $28,395-$34,190; Sport, $31,895-$37,690 and Laramie, $40-695-$42,190.

And they can be fast too. With the new Hemi, the Dodge Ram R/T (special trim level of the Sport) regular-cab 4x2 model with a short bed and 4:10 gears blasts from 0-60 mph in less about six seconds. That's better than many sportscars I've tested.

It's also one of the safest vehicles on the road, not to mention safest trucks, offering 35 active and passive safety features, including standard front and rear side-curtain air bags with Enhanced Accident Response System, knee bolsters, adjustable rear head restraints, remote keyless entry, seat belt pre-tensioners, and Anti-lock Brake System, among others

Despite how fast the Canadian automotive landscape is changing, pickups still account for 16.5 per cent of all vehicles sales in Canada, and that's a number any automaker would be foolish to ignore.

The interior of the 2009 Ram was totally redone and now features much higher grade materials.

2009 Dodge Ram

Type: Full-size pickup truck
Price: From $25,995 to $37,490
Engine: 3.7-litre, DOHC V6 (215 hp, 235 lb/ft); 4.7-litre OHV V8 (310 hp, 330 lb/ft); 5.7-litre OHV V8 (390 hp, 407 lb/ft.

Highlights

- More fuel efficient
- Many trim levels
- Great traction

Nissan Canada's new 1.6-litre version of its Versa compact has a lower starting price of $12,498.

Nissan introduces new Versa

MODEL Nissan Canada has launched a totally repositioned Nissan Versa Sedan, which features a starting price of $12,498 (excluding Freight and PDE charges).

The new Versa Sedan focuses squarely on value and fuel economy, with its standard 107 hp DOHC 16-valve, 1.6-litre, four-cylinder engine delivering responsive performance and a 5.8 L/100 km Highway fuel economy rating (with the five-speed manual transmission).

The Versa 1.6 Sedan went on sale at Nissan dealers nationwide from December 1, 2008.

The Value Option Package includes A/C, power windows, heated power mirrors and remote keyless entry among other features. And, there is no compromise on safety. The Versa 1.6 Sedan is equipped with six standard airbags, including front-seat and side-curtain airbags.

The new, high-value Versa 1.6 Sedan features a smaller displacement 1.6-litre engine (versus the 1.8-litre on the Hatchback), standard five-speed manual transmission, with a four-speed automatic transmission is also available.

Fuel economy with the five-speed manual is rated at 7.7L/100 km city, 5.8L/100 km highway, and 7.8L/100 km city, 5.9L /100 km highway with the four-speed automatic.

In repositioning Versa for the 2009 model year, the 1.6L Sedan joins the five-door Hatchback.

The Hatchback, starting at $13,598, comes with a standard 1.8L engine and is available in both S and SL trims. The Hatchback has a six-speed manual transmission standard and an optional four-speed automatic or an Xtronic CVT is available.

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*Limited time lease/finance offer available through Volkswagen Finance on approved credit for new and in stock 2008 and 2009 models. First monthly payment free up to a maximum of $250 for City Golf / City Jetta and Rabbit, $400 for GTI, Jetta 2.5 / Jetta Wagon / Jetta TDI / Jetta 2.0T models, New Beetle / New Beetle Convertible and Tiguan, $500 for Eos, all Passat models, Routan and Touareg (taxes included – no cash value). Lease/finance example: MSRP for 2008 Jetta 2.5 base model with manual transmission is $21,975 for a monthly payment of $259/$619 for 48/36 months based on 1.5%/0.9% lease/finance APR. Finance cost of borrowing is $306. Total lease/finance obligation is $14,899/$22,281. $2,467 down payment or equivalent trade-in and $310 security deposit due at lease inception. Freight and PDI of $1,335, PPSA, license, insurance, registration, dealer charges, options, and applicable taxes are extra. $0.12/km over 80,000 km charged at lease end. **Discounts offered on cash purchases for new and in stock 2008 models in the amount of $1,000 for GTI, $1,500 for all Passat models, $2,000 for City Golf and City Jetta, $2,500 for New Beetle / New Beetle Convertible, Rabbit and Jetta 2.5L, $3,500 for Jetta 2.0T and $6,000 on Touareg V6 and V8. MSRP for models shown are: $65,475 for 2008 Touareg V6 Execline with optional sports package, $44,975 for 2008 Passat CC Highline V6, $39,975 for 2009 Routan Highline, $17,336 for 2009 City Golf with Bravo accessory wheels, and $24,970 for 2008 New Beetle Sedan with accessory wheels. Freight, PDI, PPSA, license, insurance, registration, dealer charges, options and applicable taxes are extra. At participating Ontario Volkswagen dealerships only. Certain conditions apply. Offer ends December 31, 2008 and is subject to change or cancellation without notice. Dealer may sell/lease for less. Supplies limited. See dealer or visit vw.ca for details. "Volkswagen", the Volkswagen logo and all vehicle model names are registered trademarks of Volkswagen AG, used under licence. © 2008 Volkswagen Canada.

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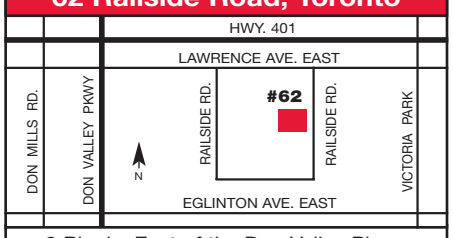

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Online habits
The percentage of travellers making online airline, rental car and hotel reservations increased 15 percentage points during the past year, according to a survey by U.S. firm J.D. Powers and Associates. But bookings for independent travel websites increased by only one percentage point since 2007. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Travel

A seven-resort tour

Those who yearn for variety on their holidays can opt for a tour package that lets them hit seven ski destinations in B.C. and Alberta over a mere two weeks. The Big Kahuna tour from Moose Travel Network heads to Whistler, Big White, Silver Star, Sunshine Village, Lake Louise, Kicking Horse and Fernie Alpine. See moosenetwork.com. THE CANADIAN PRESS

TRAVELDESK@METRONEWS.CA

Two tales of the Riviera Nayarit

On Mexico's Pacific Coast, you can live the high life or go off-grid

DENISE BALKISSOON
for Metro Canada

The term "snow squall" is now in regular rotation on the weather report and just about every Canadian is ready to jump on a flight south. But while the desire for more degrees Celsius is widespread, winter travellers have many differences.

Some nine-to-fivers just want a week on the beach, period: This type of vacationer considers doing absolutely nothing the best antidote to the daily grind. Others are trying to inject some adventure and new experiences into a life made grey by routine.

Either way, the stretch of ocean dubbed the Riviera Nayarit offers enticements to every sort of sun worshipper.

Nayarit is a small province in central Mexico, just below the Tropic of Cancer. The southern point of its coastal region is Puerto Vallarta, legendary as a vacation spot ever since Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton made it their love nest in the 1960s.

Once tiny, Puerto Vallarta is now a bustling tourist hot spot, sometimes tacky, sometimes fabulous, full of little art galleries worth an afternoon's perusal. For those wanting something more chilled out, head 20 minutes north of the airport to Nuevo Vallarta, where a strip of hotels caters to the weary beach bum. Most of these are full-service resorts, but keep in mind that every all-inclusive is not created equal. Even if your holiday itinerary reads only "beach, buffet, beer, repeat," you don't want to spend your precious week eating hotdogs on a poorly kept beach.

Check out Riu Palace Pacifico, the latest Mexican mega-resort opened by the Spanish hotel chain. My cohort and I spent four days here indulging our laziest selves. After sleeping through the morning, we'd enjoy chilaquiles at the buffet, an awesome local breakfast of fried tortilla bits, beans, tomatoes and cheese.

Next, it was time to tan, jump into the ocean for a bit and then wile away the afternoon in the pool sipping Red Eyes (a surprisingly delicious blend of Clamato juice and beer). With a total of 110 hotels worldwide, Riu has the resort game down to a science.

Although busy, the Pacifico always feels spacious, with enough lounge chairs, bartenders and à la carte restaurant seats to keep all the guests in the 445 rooms happy. One nice aspect of visiting a resort here (as opposed to an all-inclusive in a country like Cuba or the Dominican Republic) is the chance to mingle with Mexican vacationers.

I lost an embarrassingly bad game of ping-pong to Bernard, a dad from Guadalajara who had made the three-hour drive west to spend a long weekend by the beach with his family. Despite its cushy trappings, the Palace is definitely a family spot, with kids chattering in rapidfire Spanish holding raucous relay races in the humongous pool. Come dark, the children disappear and grownups learn salsa in the flashy lavender ballroom that evokes a Mexican Moulin Rouge.

"Even if your holiday itinerary reads only 'beach, buffet, beer, repeat,' you don't want to spend your precious week eating hotdogs on a poorly kept beach."

STEVE JENKINSON/FOR METRO CANADA

At Stoners Surf Camp, a low-key hostel and restaurant in San Blas, the affordable overnight rates include the use of charming, rickety old bikes.

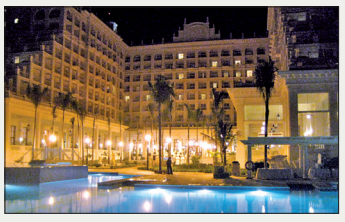
After half a week of not lifting a finger, it was time for us to slip into backpacker mode. A three-hour drive through winding roads overhung with lush leaves brought us to the northern tip of Riviera Nayarit. Here, in a wee fishing town known as San Blas, our next four days had an entirely different rhythm.

At 8 a.m., we'd have the ocean to ourselves, so he'd practise surfing and I'd take a long swim. Next, a quick bike ride down the road to pick up a breakfast of piping hot banana bread. Ten more minutes of pedalling brought us to the boys peddling Jungle Boat rides through the mangrove swamp, a steamy paradise where blue herons and anhingas fly overhead and vibrant pink orchids sprout from fallen trees; after hunching quietly in our boat for almost an hour, we finally saw a few alligators, too. Satisfied, we'd be ready for lunch at one of the many amazing taquerias, where handmade corn tortillas filled with a pile of meat and toppings cost 15 pesos (about $1.50), max.

Our home base in San Blas was Stoners Surf Camp, a low-key hostel and restaurant run by a former Mexican longboard champion. A cabana with a double bed was just 200 pesos a night (including the use of charming, rickety old bikes). Sleeping just 15 feet from the crashing waves made afternoon siestas especially romantic, and we had front row seats when the local surfers hit the waves just before dusk.

We'd watch them show off their skills, then bike into town to grab dinner and avoid the swarms of tiny mosquitos that appear as the sun sets. The main plaza was good for an hour or two of people watching, its trees full of invisible birds that squawk incessantly at all hours. Since the sidewalks roll up pretty early here, by 10 p.m. we'd be back in our secluded beach hut.

Would I rather have been welcoming the dawn with the partying revellers at the Riu Palace? I'm just glad I got to fit in both.



STEVE JENKINSON/FOR METRO CANADA

Riviera Nayarit

- Riu Palace Pacifico (above), double suites including meals and drinks for two, from $1,800 a week; riu.com.
- Stoners Surf Camp, two-person cabanas from 150 pesos a night; stonerssurfcamp.com.
- Pan de Plantano Juan Banana, 219 Calle Canalizo Sur, San Blas. Fresh banana bread daily, 40 pesos a loaf.
- La Parrillada, west end of the main plaza, San Blas. Tacos from 10 pesos. Try the asada (steak) and camarones (shrimp), and pile on all six sauces and toppings.
- Mike McDonald, 75 Avenida Benito Juarez, San Blas. A nice restaurant for a sit-down meal. Try the pollo mole (chicken mole) enchiladas.

DENISE BALKISSOON/ FOR METRO CANADA

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16:00-17:00	Chinese	China 10,11 days

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☎: 1-866-750-9800 Sandy, Irene, Fanny
All the prices include air tickets, local transfer, meals and first entrance of visits mentioned in the program, all taxes, double room occupancy, and compensation funds($3.5/$1000)

High praise for Whistler Blackcomb
Conde Nast Traveler magazine's annual ski poll named B.C.'s Whistler Blackcomb the best ski resort town in North America. Whistler Blackcomb also won for best apres-ski and activities, as well as for best local dining. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Top spots to ring in the new year

From Madrid to Rio, you can find spectacular Dec. 31 celebrations

ROMINA McGUINNESS
Metro World News

RIO CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAUS

TONYMARSHPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

Left, New Year's Eve celebrations in Rio de Janeiro. Right, Hogmany celebrations in Edinburgh are equally explosive.

"So, what are your plans for New Year's Eve?" is probably among the questions we dread the most. As the most hyped-up night of the year, Dec. 31 is a bit like an insanely successful sibling — almost impossible to live up to.

Somehow, you always hear about some "friend of a friend" who hosts the most mind-blowing New Year's Eve parties, whereas all you can remember from last year is the sound of your grandfather clock chiming 12.

The best solution is to go abroad. Whatever you do will be new and exciting — and just saying you jumped on a plane will make you sound exotic.

Guzzle some grapes in Madrid

Where to be at midnight: The central square of Puerta del Sol

Why: The Madrileños are known as Los Gatos, or cats, thanks to their love of a good party and ability to go without sleep. After a traditional family dinner, the New Year's Eve celebrations take off around the city's main square, the Puerta del Sol. The countdown is followed from the clock on the Casa de Correos building and the tradition is to eat 12 grapes, one on each chime of the clock. Toast 2009 with a glass of cava and throw some confetti in the air to mark the real start of the party.

Dress Code: The Spaniards believe that good luck comes to those who wear red underwear on the night, so build your outfit from there.

Next day cure: Chocolate con churros: Dip these crispy deep-fried doughnuts into hot chocolate that's as thick as soil.

Sail the seas in Rio de Janeiro

Where to be at midnight: Copacabana Beach

Why: Be amongst the 2,500,000 people to celebrate the "Véspera de Ano Novo" by partaking in a ritual dedicated to the Goddess of the Sea, Deity Lemanja. An African tradition, people make little boats bearing the goddess' image, which are launched and left to float on the ocean. People also arrive armed with gifts including white flowers, candles and champagne as an offering to the goddess. Stay on to witness the exuberant firework displays on show after the clock strikes 12.

Dress Code: White bikini or swimming trunks.

Next day cure: If you're still there, take another dip in the ocean, then head for Café do Forte, a magnificent coffee stop with views stretching across Copacabana bay. (confeitariacolombo.com.br)

Be the first to celebrate in Sydney

Where to be at midnight: Sydney Harbour Bridge

Why: Make your way over to the harbour's shores and be one of the first people to toast 2009. As the first major themed fireworks event of the night, it's no wonder Sydney's skyline becomes a dazzling display of booms, bangs and sparkling lights. If you're not scared of the crowd, head over to either of the two iconic vantage points of The Opera House and Mrs. Macquarie's Point where views are famously spectacular.

Dress code: Flip-flops — you don't want to spend the evening with your fancy high heels stuck in the sand.

Next day cure: A chilled picnic by the harbour should settle spirits.

Hogmanay mania in Edinburgh

Where to be at midnight: Hogmanay Street Party, Princes Street

Why: The Hogmanay street party is one of the most traditional but liveliest ways to waltz into the new year. Live music stages and a variety of comic acts form an irresistible party on the last night of the year. Try to book a ticket to the evening's Concert in the Garden starting at 9 p.m. on Princes Street. This year, international music band Groove Armada and solo artist Paolo Nutini will rock your way into the new year. Be sure to squeeze in the fireworks display and a glimpse at the eerie views of Edinburgh Castle by night. If the street partying has left you fighting frostbite, go off "First-Footing." Shortly after the clock strikes 12, "first-footers" go to their neighbours' home to wish them a Happy New Year — armed with a lump of coal (to keep fires burning all year round) and a bottle of whisky (the clock has only just struck 12 — remember?). Tradition has it that if a tall dark man is the first to cross your front-door threshold, good luck will come your way. However, women and redheads are seen as a jinx.

Dress code: Tradition might forbid you from wearing anything under your kilt, but otherwise layer up. This is Scotland, and it's an open-air street party we're talking about.

Next day cure: Brunch at Montpeliers, located on the so-called "Posh End" of Bruntsfield Place. Collapse on the plush leather sofa seats and lazily watch the world go by whilst eating a warm courgette frittata.

Airfares

ORLANDO $6
Travel Dec 7 - Dec 19/ts + taxes & fees $223

Jamaica $75
Travel Jan 11 - Jan 18/5g + taxes & fees $268

Las Vegas $79
Travel Dec 14 - Dec 18/wg + taxes & fees $206

St Maarten $99
Travel Dec 12 - Dec 21/5gts + taxes & fees $235

Cancun $105
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New York City $124
Travel Jan 21 - Jan 28/pd + taxes & fees $114

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Puerto Plata 4-Star $438
Holiday Village Golden Beach + taxes & fees $308
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Varadero 4-Star $485
Mercure Playa de Oro + taxes & fees $210
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USA Holidays

Niagara Falls Weekend $149
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Las Vegas 4 Nights $165
Imperial Palace + taxes & fees $230
INCLUDES roundtrip airfare and 4 nights 3-star accom on the Las Vegas Strip. Departs Dec 14/swg/wg. UPGRADE to 4-star Flamingo Las Vegas from $10 per night.

California Fly & Drive $529
+ taxes & fees $249
INCLUDES airfare to San Francisco, return from Los Angeles and 7-day car rental with unlimited mileage to discover the Golden Coast. Jan 21/inf/ac. ADD San Francisco helicopter tour from $179.

Cruise Holiday

BAHAMAS CRUISE & STAY $499
Monarch of the Seas + taxes & fees $296
INCLUDES roundtrip airfare to Orlando, 3-night Bahamas cruise with Royal Caribbean visiting Nassau and Coco Cay, 5 nights 3-star accom at the Best Western Lakeside Resort near *Walt Disney World* Resort in Orlando. Departs Jan 16/inf/ts. ADD *Walt Disney World* 5-day *Magic Your Way* Base Ticket from $270.

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Visit **DisneyGiftCard.com** for more information about the Disney Gift Card program.

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Von Trapp hotel halted

The Austrian city of Salzburg has blocked plans to open a hotel in a former home of the von Trapp family, immortalized in The Sound of Music, after protests by neighbours. Area residents had feared tourists would tie up traffic and make a nuisance of themselves. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ontario outings

VALERIE LOISELEUX

Which way to the snowshoe trails? Read on for some suggestions.

Snowshoeing through the air

• If snowshoeing on terra firma isn't exciting enough for you, then try snowshoes across a suspension bridge over Georgian Bay with Scenic Caves Nature Adventures. You'll cross the bridge, then explore the forest on top of the Niagara Escarpment, which is undeniably one of our most scenic landforms. Groups of 15 and more are eligible for a full-day pass on weekends and holidays for $13. For details, visit *sceniccaves.com*.

Swans and snowshoes

• Meet the famous trumpeter swans of Wye Marsh, just east of Midland, Ont., by signing up for a three-hour Winter Snowshoe Ecotour. Naturalist guides will lead you on a trek to find both the swans and the local creatures of the forest. You'll learn survival, animal tracking and GPS skills and put them to the test. Tours are held Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and cost $50. For pre-registration, visit *wyemarsh.com*.

Lighting up the night

• Make a trip up north and bask in the glow of the Festival of Northern Lights in Owen Sound, Ont. You'll encounter more than 350 Christmas light displays of all shapes and sizes, installed over an 18-kilometre-wide area. The displays are lit daily from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m.; for more details, and for other local events happening at the same time, visit *festivallights.ca*.

Farm family fun

• Get out of the urban and into the rural by taking in some Gammondale Farm family fun. The farm, located near Thunder Bay, Ont., offers an old-fashioned, horse-drawn sleigh ride as well as steamy cups of hot cocoa in a heated cabin. Winter activities run from now to March 2009. Call 1-888-705-3646 toll-free to reserve for your party. JOSEPHINE LIM/ FOR METRO CANADA

Ski resorts may have tough season

Canadian ski operators could be in for a tough season this winter as travellers rethink their vacation plans amid growing economic problems in this country and around the world.

Financing and credit troubles have already plagued several resorts, while others are hoping loyal skiers and snowboarders looking to stay close to home will help make up for any drop in visitors from further afield.

Gabor Forgacs, a professor in Ryerson University's tourism program, says it probably won't be a disastrous year, but it will undoubtedly be worse. "We don't see any huge dangerous drops," like hotels or ski lift operators closing down, says Forgacs. "But definitely the crowds will be somewhat thinner, and those who come will be a little more careful."

Forgacs says skiers and snowboarders will likely try to save money by "downtrading" — choosing cheaper hotels and opting for fewer frills — and by taking shorter trips that are closer to home.

CANADIAN OLYMPIC COMMITTEE

B.C's Whistler ski resort.

However, he says people who still have steady incomes and believe their jobs are secure aren't likely to cancel their travel plans outright.

There have already been signs the weakening economy is affecting Canadian ski hills.

Intrawest ULC, which owns several sites including B.C.'s Whistler-Blackcomb and Mont Tremblant in Quebec, refinanced a $1.7-billion loan with its parent company in October, just hours before a deadline that could have seen Intrawest's assets sold off. The Revelstoke Mountain Resort in eastern B.C., which launched last season, has delayed the opening of its new hotel and high-speed gondola until the end of December.

But the Canadian Ski Council remains optimistic. The council's president, Colin Chedore, acknowledges this season won't be as good as 2007-2008, when there were a record 20 million visits to ski hills across the country — a six per cent increase over the previous year.

But he says operators are hopeful Canadians will still visit their local ski hills, with a lower dollar keeping Canadians at home while encouraging Americans living close to the border to travel north.

"So far, season pass sales and other things that point to a domestic market being very strong are up," says Chedore. "The dollar's going to be favourable to us — that's good news that we never had last year." THE CANADIAN PRESS

What's new at Canadian ski resorts for this winter

Whistler-Blackcomb, B.C.
Peak-to-peak gondola opens Dec. 12, carrying skiers and snowboarders 4.4 kilometres between the two mountains in 11 minutes.

Grouse Mountain, B.C.
Two new quad chairlifts.

Cypress Mountain, B.C.
A gladed run called the Shore Glades passes through forests and opens up with panoramic views of Vancouver.

Revelstoke Mountain Resort, B.C.
The hotel and high-speed quad will open at end of December, later than first scheduled. The new resort has doubled its terrain compared with last season to over 1,200 hectares.

Panorama, B.C.
The new terrain park is designed to allow skiers and snowboarders to improve their skills on rails, walls, boxes and the halfpipe. A permanent "big air" jump will be built at the base of the park.

Kicking Horse Mountain Resort, B.C.
More than 12 hectares of gladed skiing.

Horseshoe Resort, Ont.
The terrain park has doubled in size.

Batawa Ski Hill, Ont.
New quad chairlift instead of old T-bar system.

Uplands Ski Centre, Ont.
The hill's first terrain park opens.

Mont Saint-Sauveur, Que.
Invested over $4.5 million in upgrades, including a quad chairlift to replace the Nordique triple chair.

Le Massif, Que.
More than 10 hectares of new hors piste skiing runs, four new glade runs, a relocated and upgraded terrain park.

Poley Mountain, N.B.
A half-dozen new trails with the addition of the new triple chair lift. Removing the T-bar lift has made room for a mogul run.

Marble Mountain, Corner Brook, N.L.
Two new runs: one glade, one novice. The terrain park has doubled in size, and there is a new conveyor lift on the beginner hill. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Sports fans find a new haven

Babe Ruth's 1934 uniform, Joe DiMaggio's record-breaking ball from his legendary 56-game hitting streak, and jerseys from NBA and NFL greats can be seen at the new Sports Museum of Los Angeles, all from the collection of Gary Cypres. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Frazzle-free flying tips

AIRPORTS If you're flying to a holiday get-together, here are some tips from the U.S. Transportation Security Administration to help speed your way through airport security.

- Do not gift-wrap carry-on items. Security officers are required to remove the wrapping paper. Wrapped gifts should be packed in your checked bags.
- Do not bring remote-controlled toys as carry-on luggage. You can put them in checked bags.
- Pies (and other food, such as gingerbread, cookies and the like) are permitted as carry-on items.
- Jams and jellies are considered gels and are therefore subject to the 3-1-1 rules if brought as carry-on items: They must be in containers no bigger than 3 ounces, and they must all fit in one one-quart clear zip-top plastic bag.
- Every U.S. airport with more than one security lane now has a designated "family lane" for travellers with kids, or those with special needs or those who just want a few more minutes in the screening process. Travellers carrying medically necessary liquids should also use these lanes. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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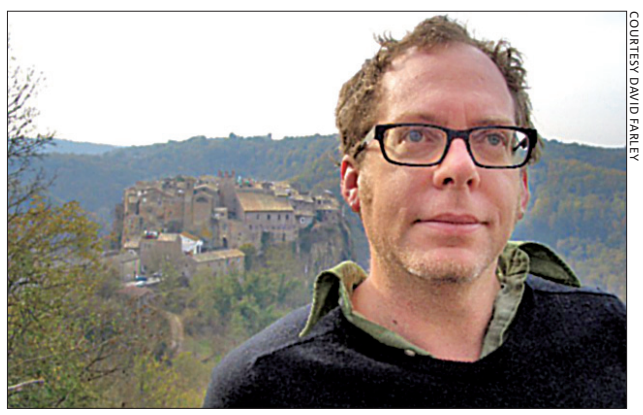

COURTESY DAVID FARLEY

Travel writer David Farley in Calcata, Italy, where he lived while working on his upcoming book, An Irreverent Curiosity.

Jet-setting around the world (and getting paid for it), the life of a travel writer is a glamorous one. Trying to get into this coveted and competitive career isn't easy, prompting many to ask: How do I break into the biz? I regularly get e-mails from readers asking for advice. While I do my best to share what I know, it's nice to get a second opinion.

Meet David Farley, a New York-based writer who teaches travel writing at New York University. He has been widely published and is the author of the soon-to-be-released travel book, An Irreverent Curiosity: In Search of the Church's Strangest Relic in Italy's Oddest Town, available next spring.

Farley shares his expertise on how you can break into the travel writing biz:

TAKE A TRAVEL WRITING COURSE offered by schools in your area.

READ BOOKS ABOUT THE WRITING CRAFT. Travel Writing by Don George and published by Lonely Planet is a great place to start.

READ ARTICLES WRITTEN BY CELEBRATED TRAVEL WRITERS. The best travel writing captures a sense of place. Tap into your five senses to bring the place alive, adding depth and vividness to your descriptions. Add quotes and historical/political context to situate the destination.

IT'S IMPORTANT THAT YOUR ARTICLE HAS AN "ANGLE," a unique take on the place. Editors want something that hasn't been done before. Up-and-coming neighbourhoods, trends and unique destinations always make for a good angle.

THE DUTY OF A TRAVEL WRITER is to go one step beyond the realm of an average tourist. Like a reporter, you must talk to people, arrange interviews and get relevant quotes.

MOST TRAVEL EDITORS DON'T WANT TO READ PROPOSALS, they want to see the finished article, already written and polished. Find out the e-mail address of a newspaper's travel editor and send it on. If that editor wants the piece, they'll buy it from you and you'll have your first big clip.

PITCH YOUR WORK to local papers, magazines, newsletters and travel websites. Try to get published anywhere and everywhere.

TRAVEL WRITERS DON'T MAKE MUCH MONEY. On assignment, it's nice hotels; at home, it's bare cupboards and Ramen noodles. Few people can make a living solely from it. Either stick to your day job and write on the side, or become a full-time writer that focuses on travel, but also writes about other passions.

DRIVE IS MOST IMPORTANT to becoming a successful travel writer. Get into the mindset that nothing is going to stop you from getting what you want. The most successful students I've taught weren't the most talented, but rather the most determined.

Good luck and safe travels.

Julia Dimon is co-host of Word Travels, airing on OLN, and editor of thetraveljunkie.ca.

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$357 +taxes & fees $308.00 PUERTO PLATA Luperon Beach Resort 3★ • all inclusive • 7 nights Jan. 8 NOL, c6	$397 +taxes & fees $308.00 PUERTO PLATA Puerto Plata Village 3½★ • all inclusive • 7 nights Jan. 30 NOL, ts	$497 +taxes & fees $199.00 VARADERO Club Puntarena 3★ • all inclusive • 7 nights Jan. 2 NOL, ts	$547 +taxes & fees $190.00 COSTA RICA Estrellamar 3★ • 2 meals/day • 7 nights Jan. 13 NOL, ts	$647 +taxes & fees $237.00 EL SALVADOR Decameron Salinitas 4★ • all inclusive • 7 nights Jan. 5 NOL, ts	$697 +taxes & fees $308.00 PUNTA CANA Carabela Beach 3½★ • all inclusive • 7 nights Jan. 22 NOL, ts
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Don't hold your breath
The University of Toronto is alerting faculty and staff not to expect any money from its endowment funds in April because of investment losses due to the market turmoil. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Workology

Centennial College

EDITOR: DOUGLAS DUNLOP, DOUGLAS.DUNLOP@METRONEWS.CA

Contract work the wave of the future?

Job Trends

ROBYN YOUNG
for Metro Canada

An IT professional, Craig Barbisan has spent the last seven years working contract to contract for different companies.

His longest project lasted about two-and-a-half years, and although his job security has at times been tenuous, he says he wouldn't trade the experience he's gained.

"You constantly have the opportunity to do new things," he said, sitting in the living room of his renovated, Beach-area home where he lives with his wife and young son.

With contract work, each job is a new challenge; the learning curve is steep, he said, but a contract worker can come out of each project with a brand new set of skills and contacts.

And, as long as you manage your money well, contract workers have the potential to come out ahead financially.

The trend toward contract over full-time employment is in full swing, says Robert Waghorn, spokesman for Monster.ca.

"Within the … Canadian market, part-time has been the favoured option currently," he said.

This movement is partially motivated by employees new to the workforce who prefer changing jobs and companies frequently, and partly the result of employers tightening their belts and choosing to save on benefits and pension plans.

Barbisan said for a young worker willing to take the risk and looking to build their resumé, the advantages of contract work can be tenfold but there are a few things to keep in mind.

"It's important to have a good cash cushion and adequate emergency funds on hand to tide you over in between contracts," says Tina Tehranchian, a Certified Financial Planner with Assante Capital Management.

Most financial advisers recommend stashing three to six months worth of salary in easy-to-access liquid funds for emergencies, such as a sickness or job loss, but it should also be a matter of practice for contract workers who are often between projects.

Another challenge is remembering to set aside money for taxes.

Working with his accountant, Barbisan has found it easier to pay his taxes monthly rather than saving up the cash and waiting until year's end.

Maybe most important of all, Tehranchian said, is securing health and insurance coverage suited to the employee's needs.

"You have to look at how big the risk you're covering is," she said.

These days, Barbisan is starting to lean toward full-time employment now as his family responsibilities grow with son and another baby due in February.

"Your tolerance for risk changes as your life circumstances change," he said.

ROBYN YOUNG / FOR METRO CANADA

Craig Barbisan plays with his two-and-a-half-year-old son Nolan in the basement of his home last week. He's been a contract worker for the past seven years and says a benefit of contract work has been a more flexible work schedule which translates into more time with his family.

Planning ahead

- Tina Tehranchian said it's important for people who are self employed or on contract to ensure they have enough saved for emergencies, have good insurance plans in place, and are contributing RRSPs.

The law can stop unilateral pay cuts

WorkplaceLaw

Daniel Lublin
dan@toronto-employmentlawyer.com

Not all companies have turned to mass layoffs in order to weather the current economic storm. There are other devices: Many have turned to temporary layoffs, hiring freezes and slashing salaries in order to reduce overhead and maintain the bottom line. But while employees have no legal entitlement to continued employment, they do retain some basic rights.

National equipment supplier DIGI Canada recently learned this the hard way. When its Western Regional Manager, Douglas Stewart, refused to accept a substantial pay cut, he was fired. Stewart sued and he later succeeded in court.

Having been fired by DIGI earlier in his career, Stewart, a lifer in the industry, knew better than to leave the terms of his employment to chance. When DIGI's president sought to recruit Stewart to resume his old job, Stewart rejected an initial offer but finally agreed to return based on a promise of a three-year contract and a hefty salary.

However, DIGI's president was replaced a year later, and the new boss soon took aim at the contract, requesting that Stewart take a pay cut. But, acting on the advice of legal counsel, Stewart knew that DIGI couldn't unilaterally reduce his pay and he rejected DIGI's entreaties. Finally fed up with Stewart's reluctance to renegotiate the deal, DIGI fired him with 13 months remaining on the initial contract.

Disagreeing over appropriate severance, Stewart and DIGI next met in court asking the judge to decide. Stewart had negotiated a three-year contract. In employment law, employees whose fixed-term contracts are terminated are entitled to be paid for the remainder of the term, unless the contract states otherwise. In reviewing the contract, an Alberta appellate court recently agreed with Stewart that the contract was unambiguous and that his efforts to find another job after he was fired were reasonable.

Employers can't ignore certain fundamental rights:

PAY CUTS: If a contract does not permit it, a salary can't be unilaterally reduced.

LAYOFFS: Without a contractual term or standard authorizing layoffs, employees may be able to treat themselves as dismissed or sue to recoup lost wages during the period of layoff.

SEVERANCE PAY: Severance is how long it would take to find another job. With a depressed economy, an employee can argue that severance should be extended.

CONTRACTS: Written agreements are increasingly being used to reduce basic entitlements or avoid lawsuits altogether.

Daniel A. Lublin is an employment lawyer focusing on the law of dismissal; dan@toronto-employmentlawyer.com.

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University of Toronto Robarts Library receives $10-million donation

University of Toronto alumni Russell and Katherine Morrison announced yesterday a $10-million gift towards the $40-million renovation of the University of Toronto's Robarts Library, which is set to begin next year. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Party on Wayne Co., party on Garth Ltd.

Despite economic downturn and mounting losses, holiday cheer prevails at some companies

ROBYN YOUNG
for Metro Canada

While the economic outlook this festive season might be frightful, most office holiday parties will still be delightful according to a recent poll.

In the poll conducted by Harris/Decima for Workopolis, an online career-solutions company, seven out of 10 holiday party decision-makers surveyed in Canada said they will spend the same amount on festivities as they have in past years.

Only 11 per cent of those decision makers said they'll be cancelling the party altogether.

Pat Sullivan, president of Workopolis, said given the current economy, they were surprised to find that 68 per cent of employers said they would not be cutting back on party costs at all.

"Although the economic conditions are difficult, I think we still want to thank our employees and still want to tell them what a great job they've done," Sullivan said.

To maintain company morale during tough economic times, Sullivan said, a festive holiday party might be even more crucial this year than ever before.

While 53 per cent of party organizers said they have not considered any cost-cutting measures, 17 per cent said they plan to cut out some of the holiday cheer: One in five said they would plan for less expensive entertainment or venues; 15 per cent said they would hold the party on company premises to cut costs; 13 per cent said they would hold the party on a weeknight rather than the weekend; 12 per cent said they would invite employees only and not include significant others; and nine per cent said they would hold the party during the day rather than the evening.

"Although the economic conditions are difficult, I think we still want to thank our employees and still want to tell them what a great job they've done."
Workopolis President Pat Sullivan

And as for employees thoughts on the holiday party being scaled back, 62 per cent said they would understand.

Regardless of the economic landscape, however, a trend that seems to be emerging is for companies not to offer an office holiday party at all.

General Motors, for example, told Metro they did away with the annual event long before the current economic downturn.

"That's something we haven't done on a broad scale for a number of years," said Patty Faith, manager of media relations for General Motors Canada.

The company chooses to spend its time and money on community charities instead, she said.

As for Workopolis itself, they're holding their holiday festivities in January.

"The timing coincides with our sales conference, so that employees from our eight offices across the country have the opportunity to see each other and celebrate the year's successes," Sullivan said.

He added that the company will spend about the same as last year on their holiday celebration.

The Workopolis poll, conducted between Nov. 6 and 10, surveyed a sample of 617 working Canadians by phone, of which 149 are involved with financial decisions regarding workplace holiday parties and 443 are not.

The margin of error of the two subgroups is +/- 8 per cent and +/- 4.7 per cent respectively.

While 53 per cent of party organizers said they have not considered any cost-cutting measures, 17 per cent said they plan to cut out some of the holiday cheer, and one in five said they would plan for less expensive entertainment.

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Canadians spend 29 per cent of leisure time online

A new global poll conducted by TNS Canadian Facts found that Canadians spend 29 per cent of their leisure time online, no matter how much spare time they actually have. METRO NEWS SERVICES

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Finding the future with innovation

"I can't understand why people are frightened of new ideas," avant-garde composer John Cage once said. "I'm frightened of the old ones."

Research and innovation are major driving forces behind our future prosperity — they're rays of sunshine in an otherwise gloomy economic forecast.

The world will beat a path to our door if we have something genuinely new to sell.

Towards that end, Ontario's colleges are taking up applied research and development in a big way. Once the domain of universities, the province's colleges are helping local businesses and entrepreneurs bring new ideas, products and services to market sooner.

Centennial College's Applied Research and Innovation Centre, a member of the Colleges Ontario Network for Industry Innovation (CONII), forms partnerships with employers and industries to solve immediate problems and transfer knowledge through market-driven research, development and commercialization.

Toronto-based REGEN Energy was looking for help to have its patent-pending controllers field-tested. Its wireless transmitters can be attached to building fans, pumps and air conditioning compressors that routinely cycle on and off.

The controllers communicate with each other frequently, exchanging information and making decisions about whether to permit or temporarily back off the electrical load. The goal is to smooth the building's electrical demand by avoiding peak loads that result in expensive charges.

REGEN came to Centennial to have its unique controllers tested on actual ventilation equipment over a longer period of time. Faculty and students did the research, allowing REGEN to successfully commercialize its product. The company is continuing to develop new markets through ongoing research collaboration with Centennial.

A decontamination tent is set up outside the Centennial HP Science and Technology Centre as part of a mass-casualty simulation that tests new procedures and wireless data handling for emergency responders.

In the health and information technology sector, Centennial is developing a grid-computer for bioinformatics algorithms and applications — a rapidly growing specialization that combines computer software with biological information handling. The work will create new tools that will help advance the modelling of living systems.

Centennial's well-known IDEAS Network tests actual emergency and disaster plans using students, faculty and external experts in mass-casualty simulations at the Centennial HP Science and Technology Centre. The gripping mock disasters also help test and commercialize spinoff innovations.

Centennial's applied research capacity in emergency and disaster preparedness not only benefits local industry, but ultimately will benefit society as new technologies and better trained personnel are incorporated into emergency response and recovery strategies.

It's here that ANVIL Technologies tested its innovative Bread Crumbs, which provides video, audio and text communications in a disaster setting by scattering black boxes on the scene to create a secure, ad hoc wireless network.

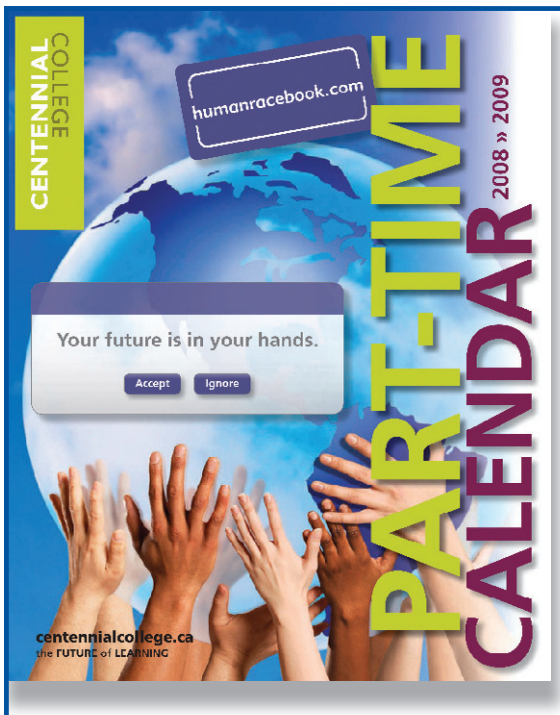
Organizers learned during the disaster simulations that a key factor for effective communication between emergency responders is a common terminology.

New research with ANVIL will focus on developing a communication framework with Bread Crumbs that allows language-independent communication between different teams of professionals to enhance co-ordination with existing health-care data systems. This new technology will help save lives and preserve critical resources.

The work goes on. Centennial and Ontario's other public colleges are eager to get involved in innovation and help advance our economy — and there's no better time than the present.

For more details about Centennial's Applied Research and Innovation Centre, visit centennialcollege.ca/applied.

–MARK TOLJAGIC



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Producers honour Milk
The Producers Guild of America have honoured the movie Milk with its Stanley Kramer Award, for its portrayal of the first openly gay man elected to major public office in the U.S. The prize is handed out to films that take on provocative social issues. **IMDB.COM**

Entertainment

Just a rumour
James Bond star Daniel Craig has brushed off rumours he is set to play the Norse god Thor in a movie adaptation of the Marvel comic book.
IMDB.COM

EDITOR: TINA COSTANZA, TINA.COSTANZA@METRONEWS.CA

Seeking redemption

ROBERT ABELE
for Metro Canada

Will Smith's status as the world's biggest movie star — whether as an earth defender (Independence Day), superhero (Hancock), or last man standing (I Am Legend) — doesn't make it any easier for the actor to handle love scenes.

In his newest film, the drama Seven Pounds, Smith's character — a haunted man seeking redemption — finds romantic solace one night in the arms of a cardiac patient played by Rosario Dawson.

No such solace existed for Smith on the set for those moments.

"Will is shockingly shy about intimacy with strangers," says Dawson, who says her gregarious, hard-working co-star pushed the filming of their kissing scenes for weeks. When it came to that day's filming, she noticed Smith revving up for it by loudly proclaiming to himself, "Yeah, we're gonna GET this scene! Whooo! Yeah, I'm ready to go today!"

Will Smith and Rosario Dawson star in new film Seven Pounds.

"I was like, 'You're kind of freakin' me out, like I need a little calm to go into this, some candles and nice music, and you're screaming like you're playing football or something,'" said Dawson.

Smith, whose wife of many years is actress Jada Pinkett Smith, smiles good-naturedly in talking about his on-camera skittishness regarding sex.

He explains it by saying that he lives in fear that a woman cast opposite him in those moments will look at her famous married scene partner as an opportunistic groper.

"I need women to be comfortable around me, and doing a love scene with our clothes off just puts me in a defensive space," he said. "But it also hurts the acting if I'm in that space."

The idea, he said, is to get to a comfortable point, "Where a hand can brush up against her and it's not, 'Oh, excuse me.'"

At least his romantic interlude in Seven Pounds was a necessary one for a story whose message of renewal in the face of debilitating trauma has come to mean everything for its relentlessly positive and upbeat star/producer.

"He didn't know that what got broken could be repaired," Smith said of his character.

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In brief

PEOPLE The brother of actor Mark Ruffalo has died a week after he was shot in the head, police said yesterday. Scott Ruffalo, 39, died late Monday night in Los Angeles, Beverly Hills Police Sgt. Renato Moreno said. Two people wanted for questioning about the shooting surrendered to police earlier Monday. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

HAPPINESS

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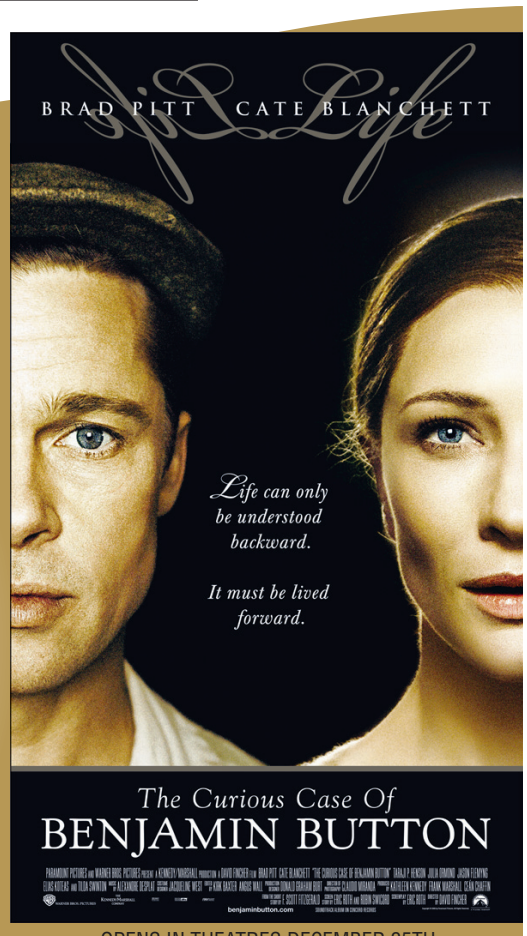

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Hurley angers animal rights advocates

Model/actress Elizabeth Hurley has sparked outrage amongst animal rights advocates after signing up to be the new face of fur fashion line Blackglama. Hurley has already shot an ad campaign for the U.S. company. **IMDB.COM**

Benjamin Button, Milk top Critics' Choice nominations

AWARDS Brad Pitt's The Curious Case of Benjamin Button and Sean Penn's Milk lead contenders for the Critics' Choice Awards with eight nominations each, including best picture and actor.

The other best-picture nominees announced yesterday: Changeling, The Dark Knight, Doubt, Frost/Nixon, The Reader, Slumdog Millionaire, WALL-E and The Wrestler.

Nominees are chosen by the Broadcast Film Critics Association. The awards will be presented Jan. 8.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Simpsons leads pack for writers guild's prizes

AWARDS The Simpsons is leading the charge for the Writers Guild of America's broadcasting awards, with five nominations, BBC News Online reports.

The series was one of five nominees for best comedy series, along with Entourage, Weeds and previous winners 30 Rock and The Office. Four episodes of the show were also nominated separately in the best animation category.

The WGA awards will be given out at a ceremony in Los Angeles on Feb. 7.

This marks the first time The Simpsons is competing for best comedy series.

30 Rock, starring Alec Baldwin and Tina Fey, was the second most nominated show with four nods in all, including three for best comedy episode.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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Before CSI, there was Scarpetta

DOROTHY ROBINSON
Metro World News

Before there was Bones Dr. G: Medical Examiner, Dexter, Forensic Files, CSI and the many, many other TV shows revolving around forensics, there was chief medical examiner Kay Scarpetta — the heroine of numerous bestselling books by crime writer Patricia Cornwell.

"I'm my own worst enemy," Cornwell says from her penthouse apartment overlooking Central Park. "I have helped to start this forensic thriller genre, which has spawned this incredible industry. At times, I feel like this has almost put me out of business."

But even though Scarpetta has been a fixture in the contemporary suspense genre for 20 years—way before Horatio Caine was just a twinkle in David Caruso's eye — Scarpetta isn't going anywhere. And she's far from going out of business.

"She's the best thing I've got," Cornwell admits in her faint Southern drawl, left over from her time at Davidson College in Virginia and her stint at the office of the chief medical examiner of Virginia. "What do I have that no one else does? Her. I have her. Nobody else has this character, and if I deserve her or not, I have her. And she depends on me to write about her because she knows I have nothing better to do."

That's why Cornwell decided to name her 16th book in the Scarpetta series after her heroine. In Scarpetta, the title character takes up assignment in New York City, where she must help solve a strange and gruesome murder where the lead suspect is a man with achondroplasia (dwarfism). The work also features many of Cornwell's trademarks — cutting-edge technology, weaving plotlines and, of course, medical mysteries.

But it is always Scarpetta who features most prominently, both in Cornwell's books and in her mind.

"She is very real to me and she is always with me. But she is not me. She's a mentally, intellectually disciplined person. She doesn't have a DUI or a mood disorder or all of the things that I've got. She says the right thing and does the right thing."

Cornwell pauses, then laughs. "But I'm probably more fun at a party."

DAN KITWOOD/GETTY IMAGES FILE PHOTO

Author Patricia Cornwell with her Crime Thriller of the Year award for Book of the Dead during the Galaxy British Book Awards earlier this year in London, England.

"I have helped to start this forensic thriller genre, which has spawned this incredible industry. At times, I feel like this has almost put me out of business."
Patricia Cornwell

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Wednesday, December 24 | WEEKDAY SERVICE
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Thursday, December 25 | SUNDAY SERVICE
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Friday, December 26 | SATURDAY SERVICE
Subway and most routes start at 6:00 a.m.

Saturday, December 27 | SATURDAY SERVICE
Subway and most routes start at 6:00 a.m.

Sunday, December 28 | SUNDAY SERVICE
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Top 10 games

The most popular game rentals (all platforms), according to Rogers Video for the period ending Dec. 7:

- 1. Gears of War 2 (Xbox 360)
- 2. Call of Duty: World at War (Xbox 360)
- 3. Fallout 3 (Xbox 360)
- 4. Call of Duty: World at War (PlayStation 3)
- 5. Mortal Kombat vs. DC Universe (Xbox 360)
- 6. Left 4 Dead (Xbox 360)
- 7. Resistance 2 (PlayStation 3)
- 8. Fable II (Xbox 360)
- 9. Prince of Persia (Xbox 360)
- 10. Need for Speed: Undercover (Xbox 360)

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Top 10 DVDs

The most popular DVD rentals, according to Rogers Video for the period ending Dec. 7:

- 1. Wanted
- 2. Step Brothers
- 3. Hancock
- 4. The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian
- 5. Tropic Thunder
- 6. The X Files: I Want to Believe
- 7. WALL-E
- 8. Fred Claus
- 9. Get Smart
- 10. Hellboy II: The Golden Army

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ugly Betty star welcomes second son with wife
Ugly Betty's Eric Mabius and his wife, interior designer Ivy Sherman, have welcomed a second son, named Rylan Jaxson Mabius. The baby was born Sunday in New York City. **PEOPLE.COM**

Coldplay responds to lawsuit

Coldplay is firing back against accusations they copied another artist's work for their hit single Viva La Vida.

In a statement released yesterday, the band responded to a copyright infringement lawsuit filed by guitarist Joe Satriani last week. That lawsuit says the Grammy-nominated song from the group's 2008 album contains "substantial, original portions" of his 2004 song If I Could Fly.

Says Coldplay: "If there are any similarities between our two pieces of music, they are entirely coincidental, and just as surprising to us as to him."

The statement goes on to say: "Joe Satriani is a great musician, but he did not write the song Viva La Vida. We respectfully ask him to accept our assurances of this and wish him well with all future endeavours."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fallon offers Late preview

ONLINE You can get a nightly preview of the future Late Night on video blogs from its future host, Jimmy Fallon.

The online segments will provide a behind-the-scenes peek at Fallon's preparations to take over for Conan O'Brien hosting NBC's Late Night in early 2009.

Jimmy Fallon

O'Brien won an upgrade to NBC's Tonight'' show.

Starting yesterday, each of Fallon's "vlogs" will go online each weeknight at 12:30 a.m. — which happens to be about the same time Late Night airs.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Street art exhibit to debut at ROM

ARTISTRY Does street art presented inside a museum cease to be street art?

That is one of the questions for visitors to ponder when viewing Housepaint, Phase 2: Shelter, which the Royal Ontario Museum describes as "Canada's first major museum exhibition of street art."

"Ten colourful canvas houses exuberantly painted by 10 of Canada's leading street artists draw attention to social problems of poverty and homelessness," says a news release describing the show, which runs at the ROM from Saturday to July 2009.

"This moving exhibition addresses many interesting issues, from homelessness and poverty in Toronto to the legitimacy of street art and graffiti in a museum context," said Francisco Alvarez, managing director of the ROM's Institute for Contemporary Culture.

"For an established organization such as the ROM to commit to an evolving process with ... street artists is truly an amazing and a rare opportunity."
Devon Ostrom

Five artists will create new works in the ICC's Roloff Beny Gallery, at the top of the museum's Michael Lee-Chin Crystal, over the course of the exhibition. The public will be able to observe the artists in person and online at housepaint.ca.

"For an established organization such as the ROM to commit to an evolving process with uncertain ends – let alone involving street artists – is truly amazing and a rare opportunity for Toronto to gain insight into a worldwide art movement," said ICC guest curator Devon Ostrom.

Participating artists include Case (Ryan MacKeen), Cant4 (Amanda Marie), Evoke (Patrick Thompson), Fauxreel (Dan Bergeron), Gene Starship (Gene Pendon), Lease (Lisa Mansfield) and Specter (Gabriel Reese).

THE CANADIAN PRESS

2.
My assistant Kim: you protect me from the masses
I've bought nothing for you – now find me my glasses!
And thanks for drafting this list of butt to kiss
(I mean - people and presents I can't afford to miss)...

thegiftcardboutique.ca

Drug users need not apply for tour

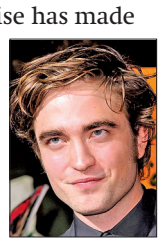
COMEBACK In an effort to keep Britney Spears away from negative influences that could hinder her comeback, all of her backup dancers are being required to submit to drug tests, E! Online reports. "They all had to be drug tested, and if they didn't pass, they were fired," a source said.

Britney Spears

METRO WORLD NEWS

Twilight star on edge in public

PEOPLE The global success of the Twilight film and book franchise has made newly minted heartthrob Robert Pattinson scared for his life, according to the National Enquirer. "People ambush me in public," Pattinson said. "I just ... don't want to get shot or stabbed."


Robert Pattinson

METRO WORLD NEWS

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Baby girl

America's Next Top Model judge Nigel Barker and his wife, model Christen Chin Barker, have welcomed their second child, a daughter, People.com reports. Jasmine Ines Barker was born on Sunday in New York City. She joins big brother Jack, 3. **IMDB.COM**

New birthplace for the arts

The heart of Toronto's artistic life shifted Monday, away from the glass and steel culture palaces of the downtown core to the cobblestone streets of the Distillery District, where a major new initiative was unveiled.

Albert Schultz, the general director of the Young Centre for the Performing Arts, stood on the stage of the Roger and Kevin Garland Cabaret Theatre to announce a vision that could have only happened in this city at this time.

A dozen of the most exciting creative forces in Toronto are coming together to form a team of resident artists who will not only share their own work but will help those still developing to grow and prosper. The program is possible thanks to a gift of $1 million from broadcasting and music magnate Gary Slaight and his wife, Donna.

"Welcome to the face of the Young Centre," beamed Schultz. "Welcome to the vision of the Young Centre."

The nine people who joined Schultz on the platform (three were kept away by prior professional commitments) looked like a cross-section of the city in their diversity and projected an artistic sense of multi-purpose vibrance as well. From modern dance to gospel music, from experimental theatre to cabaret song-stylings, this group covers all the bases.

Practically speaking, it means the Young Centre, which is about to celebrate its third anniversary and has offered 2,000 performances, mainly thanks to Soulpepper Theatre and the George Brown Theatre School, will see its already busy venues shift into higher gear. An ongoing series of "discovery labs" will be devoted to the process of creation, turning into "open studios" where the public can share in what develops.

A five-day event called the New Waves Festival will turn every square inch of the Young Centre over to what Schultz calls "a collaborative explosion" between the resident artists and the young creators they have been mentoring, presented in co-operation with Luminato.

COLIN MCCONNELL/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Young Centre general director Albert Schultz poses with nine of the centre's 12 new resident artists, clockwise from far left: Waleed Abdulhamid, John Millard, David Buchbinder, Andrew Craig, Soheil Parsa, Claudia Moore, Weyni Mengesha, Suba Sankaran, Schultz and Andrea Nann.

Schultz said his dream is for the Young Centre to emerge as a more accessible, more populist version of Manhattan's famed Lincoln Centre, "where established cultural icons breathe the same air as their fellow artists."

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Doherty's role not dead
Stars of the new 90210 are putting to rest the recent rumours that Shannen Doherty's character Brenda Walsh will be killed off when she makes another appearance on the prime-time soap. **E! NEWS ONLINE**

Leno leading prime time

IntelleVision

Rick McGinnis
rick.mcginnis@metronews.ca

TALKED TO DEATH: Jay Leno's career has been an anxious curiosity ever since NBC let it be known that his Tonight Show slot was being handed over to Conan O'Brien, and for months now everybody — including Leno — has been acting like he'd be moving to ABC as soon as Jeff Zucker and NBC would let him slip free of the bonds of his contract.

That bit of conventional wisdom was knocked on the head yesterday with the news that NBC would be giving Leno a 10 p.m. weekday slot for a new talk show, starting in the fall of 2009.

As things stand now, that means three different talk show slots on the network will run from prime time to late night, with Leno, Conan O'Brien and Jimmy Fallon all on NBC's payroll as hosts. (Or 3½, according to the L.A. Weekly's Nikki Finke, who reminds us of Carson Daly's spot on NBC's schedule, which seems charitable of her.)

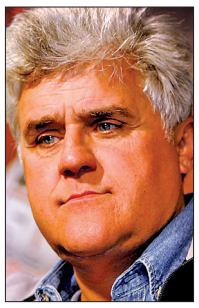
The decision might look like NBC is belatedly acknowledging Leno's value to the network, but it has more to do with Zucker and programming henchman Ben Silverman's singular focus on the bottom line and their fervent intention to cut down on the number of weekly hours of network programming.

"Can we continue to broadcast 22 hours in prime time? Three of our competitors don't," Zucker said at a media conference in New York this week, according to the Hollywood Reporter. "Can we continue to broadcast seven days a week? One of our competitors doesn't."

"The decision might look like NBC is belatedly acknowledging Leno's value to the network, but it has more to do with Zucker and programming henchman Ben Silverman's singular focus on the bottom line."

Any way you look at it, it's a cost-cutting move, since five weekly hours of chat will cost far less than five similar hours of evening drama.

Leno as the lead-in for local news shows at 11 p.m. will play well with NBC affiliate stations all over the U.S., though the move is betting everything on Leno's late night audience figuring out how to record CSI on its PVRs so it can tune in — a big gamble since Leno's numbers rely heavily on older viewers who aren't as comfortable with changing longstanding habits or delayed viewing.



Jay Leno

Patt Morrison of the Los Angeles Times sees the boomer/oldster angle as the story, and not the network penny-pinching.

"Leno at 10?" Morrison wrote on a Times blog. "From The Tonight Show to The Evening Show? Pretty soon the nation will be lining up for the seniors' Early Bird Dinner Special at 4 p.m., and then coming home to fall asleep right after the Leno monologue, if there is one on the new show, and finally waking up at 3 a.m. to a screaming bladder and screaming infomercials." And so a generation begins passing from view in a fog of drowsiness and incontinence.

Rick McGinnis writes about music, movies, books and television, but not opera.

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To Be Continued...

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In brief

HOSTS American Idol judge Paula Abdul says Paula Goodspeed, a former fan that apparently committed suicide, was a "stalker," imdb.com reports.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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GlobalStyle

Kenya Hunt

Designer Goco is back, exclusively at metronews.ca/globalstyle

primetime

TO	Vu	SC		C	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
12/10/08	265	353	2	TVO	Meerkat Manor	Meerkat Manor	The Agenda With Steve Paikin		New Tricks		Human Edge (N)		Agenda-Paikin
	211	331	3	GTV	ET Canada	Entertainment	Bones		Bones (HDTV PA)		The Guard (N)		News (N)
	215	343	4	OMN1	Two/Half Men	The Simpsons	News (N)		Vivere Il	News (N)	The Simpsons	King of the Hill	Metropia
	210	302	6	CBC	Coronation St.	Jeopardy! (N)	*The Santa Clause* ★★★ (1994, Comedy) Tim Allen.				CBC News: The National		The Hour
	214	344	7	CITY	Law & Order: SVU		Little Spirit: Christmas		Stylista (N)		I Love Money		News (N)
	212	313	8	CTV	etalk	Hollywood	Law & Order "Sweetie"		Criminal Minds (N)		CSI: NY "The Triangle"		News (N)
	218	345	11	E!	The Insider (N)	E! News	Bones (HDTV PA)		E! News Celebrity news.		True Hollywood Story		News (N)
	137	763	13	TFO	Panorama		Les Citadins du rebut global		*L'Odeur de la papaye verte* ★★★ (1993, Drame)				Enfants
	-	-	14	-	Cold Case "Start-Up"		News (N)		News (N)		Two/Half Men	King	Cold Case
	213	326	15	SUN	Scrubs	George Lopez	*Flight of the Reindeer* (2000, Fantasy) Richard Thomas.				To Serve and Protect		Grill Rm.
	-	387	16	CBS	Inside Edition	Hollywood	Old Christine	Gary Unmarr	Criminal Minds (N)		CSI: NY "The Triangle"		News (N)
	-	385	17	NBC	The Insider (N)	Entertainment	Little Spirit: Christmas		Life "Canyon Flowers"		Law & Order "Sweetie"		News (N)
	-	386	18	ABC	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Pushing Daisies (N)		Private Practice (N)		(10:01) Dirty Sexy Money		News
	219	346	20	ACH-B	Instant Star	TMZ (N)	Pushing Daisies (N)		Private Practice (N)		(10:01) Dirty Sexy Money		News (N)
	-	-	28	FOX	Judge Judy (N)	Two/Half Men	Secret Millionaire (N)		Bones (HDTV PA)		Seinfeld	Two/Half Men	The Simpsons
	-	388	61	PBS	News-Lehrer	Vicar of Dibley	Great Performances (HDTV) (N)			Pavlo Mediterranean Nights			Business Rpt.
	297	652	330	WPX	Two/Half Men	Family Guy	Stylista		Stylista (N)		CW11 News at Ten (N)		Two/Half Men
	296	654	331	SBK	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Dr. Phil (HDTV) (N)		WBZ News (N)	'70s Show	Frasier	Frasier	Punk'd
	298	653	332	TLA	Jamie Foxx	Wayans Bros.	My Wife-Kids	According-Jim	Family Guy	Family Guy	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Stylista
news	502	390	26	NW	CBC News	Newman	The Hour		CBC News: The National		Extreme Speed		National
	500	500	33	CNN	Lou Dobbs Tonight		Campbell Brown: No Bias		Larry King Live		Anderson Cooper 360 (HDTV)		
	509	504	79	CNB	CNBC Reports (HDTV)				On the Money		The Big Idea With Deutsch		Mad Money
sports	405	417	22	net	Skiing: FIS World Cup Alpine		Skiing: FIS World Cup Alpine		Ultimate Fight Night (HDTV) (Live)				
	400	400	30	TSN	That's Hockey!	NHL Hockey Calgary Flames at Detroit Red Wings. (HDTV) (Live)					SportsCentre (HDTV) (Live)		
	411	457	58	OLN	Ed's Up	Videos	The Amazing Race 13		Adventures	Ed's Up	Word Travels	Pilot Guides	Pilot Guides
	417	406	81	SC	Pinks	Pass Time	Am. Thunder	Am. Thunder	Pinks	Pinks Outtakes	Wrecked	Wrecked	Pinks
family	551	542	25	YTV	Romeo!	Home Improve.	Fresh Prince	Sabrina-Witch	Futurama	Prank Patrol	Mystery Hnt.	Adrenaline Proj	Mystery Hnt.
	554	544	45	TEL	Santa Claus	Bugs Bunny & Tweety Show		Wayside	Johnny Test	Futurama	The Critic	Robot Chicken	Daughter-Devil
	556	540	51	FAM	Wizards-Place	That's-Raven	Zack & Cody	Natural-Sadie	Han. Montana	Life Derek	Ned's School	Cory in House	Zack & Cody
cable variety	602	567	27	W	Will & Grace	Friends	Grocery Bag	Maxed Out	Supersize vs. Superskinny		She's Got the Look		Style by Jury
	570	580	29	MM	Pimp My Ride	Pimp My Ride	Pimp My Ride	Pimp My Ride	Pimp My Ride	Pimp My Ride	Degrassi: Next	Degrassi: Next	PunchMuch
	615	520	31	A&E	CSI: Miami (HDTV)		Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Dog the Bounty Hunter		Parking Wars	Parking Wars	Parking Wars
	700	800	35	TLN	Centrovetrine	Sky TG 24	Un Ciclone In Famiglia 2				Raymond	Raymond	George Lopez
	571	581	36	MMM	mmmtop	MusicProfile	Back In	Back In	Revival	Where You At	Fabulous Life Of... Homes.		Party of Five
	575	583	38	CMT	Cheerleaders	Cheerleaders	Home Improve.	Home Improve.	Reba	Reba	Hope & Faith	Hope & Faith	Three Wishes
	616	521	39	SHO	Kink in Hair	Kink in Hair	Durham County		Billable Hours	G-Spot	The Starter Wife		House
	620	523	40	BVO	Desperate Housewives		Berkeley	Bravo!Videos	Wingfield	Letters	Arts & Minds	The Achievers	Law & Order
	601	562	41	SLC	Til Debt-Part	Rich Poor	X-Weighted "Gaia"		Real Housewives of OC		Filthy Rich: Cattle Drive (N)		ET Canada
	522	506	43	HIS	NCIS "Switch"		Cities of the Underworld		Captain Cook: Obsession		NCIS "Switch"		Crime Stories
	625	548	44	COM	Air Farce	Just for Laughs		Corner Gas	The Simpsons	South Park	House Party	RENO 911!	Daily Show
	600	564	46	H&G	House Hunters	Property Virgin	Mansions	The Stagers	Property Virgin	Unsellable	Million Dollar Listing		Holmes-Homes
	294	529	47	TBS	House-Payne	House-Payne	*Conspiracy Theory* ★★ (1997, Suspense) Mel Gibson, Julia Roberts.					Seinfeld	Family Guy
	576	582	49	BET	106 & Park: BET's Top 10 Live		*New Jack City* ★★★ (1991, Crime Drama), Ice-T				Brother	Brother	Black Carpet
	627	528	50	SPC	Lost "I Do"		Star Trek: Deep Space Nine		Battlestar Galactica		Ghost Hunters International (N)		Stargate SG-1
	581	566	52	MTV	Busted	After	MTV News	Cribs	Super Sweet	The Hills	Dance Life	Dance Life	MTV Live
	618	524	54	TROP	Beverly Hills, 90210		Reality	What Happen?	Family Guy	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	'70s Show	Family Guy
	603	561	56	FOOD	The Main	Chef at Home	Restaurant Makeover		Iron Chef America		Top Chef		Dinner Imposs.
	261	394	60	V	Murder, She Wrote		Summer Wine	Dinnerladies	*Secret Santa* ★★ (2003, Drama) Jennie Garth, Steve Eckholdt.				Doc
	621	527	63	STR	The Ellen DeGeneres Show		TMZ (N)	etalk	Scoring With the Stars		The Tonight Show-Jay Leno		TMZ
	553	546	65	TRE	Santa-Town	Nght Grdn	Backyardigans	A Very Fairy Christmas		Miss Spider	Comfy Couch	Rolie Polie Olie	Beren. Bears
	115	711	101	TVA	Km/h (SC)	Poule-oeufs or	*Maman Last Call* (2005, Com. dramatique) Sophie Lorain.				TVA 22 heures	(10:45) Nicola Ciccone	
	126	730	102	RDI	24 Heures en 60 minutes		Grands reportages (SC)		Le Téléjournal (SC)		RDI en direct	Le National	Le Téléjournal
	526	507	249	VIVA	Judging Amy		Commander In Chief		The West Wing		Mediums	Psychic Detect	Mediums
	300	601	301	M1	*December Boys* ★★ (2007, Drama) Daniel Radcliffe.				*Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* ★★★ (2007, Fantasy)				
	305	612	306	PIX	(7:15) *Canvas* ★ (1992, Suspense) Gary Busey.				*Anaconda* ★ (1997, Suspense), Ice Cube			(10:40) *The Boys Club*	

critics' corner

Anaconda
This horror tale's premise had potential but sinks lower than a snake's belly in its execution, specifically its two-dimensional characters and disappointing special effects. Jon Voight hams it up as a snake hunter who enlists a documentary crew to accompany him on his quest for an elusive giant reptile, which proceeds to pick them off before you can say "anaconda chow." Jennifer Lopez and Ice Cube also star — if you care. 12 PM on PIX

The Boys Club
Part coming-of-age story, part thriller, this 1997 drama stars Chris Penn — Sean's brother — as a wounded fugitive who takes refuge in a clubhouse in the Ontario woods where three teens (Devon Sawa, Dominic Zamprogna, Stuart Stone) hang out. He tells them he's a police officer on the run after exposing corruption in the department, but the truth is far scarier. Amy Stewart and Nicholas Campbell ("Da Vinci's City Hall") also star. 6 AM on PIX

Holloway is going to be a dad
Lost star Josh Holloway is going to be a daddy. The actor and his wife, Yessica, are expecting their first child, due next year. **PEOPLE.COM**

Celebrity Buzz

Friends rely on Smith for advice

MARRIAGE Actor Will Smith is under pressure from his famous friends to make his marriage to wife Jada Pinkett Smith work because they're constantly coming to him for relationship advice, imdb.com reports.

The tight-knit couple are preparing to celebrate their 11th year of married life on Dec. 31. But Smith's famous pals have "terrified" him by marking their union as the golden standard in Hollywood.

"I was with (rapper) Redman the other day (and) he said, 'Man, listen. I've got this relationship that I'm trying to make work, but I'm telling you, if you and Jada don't work, I'm done,'" Smith tells People.com. "That so terrifies me that there are people's lives that I can affect like that just with little stuff, not even having to do anything big. So I don't want to break that ... I might mess something up, and that sorta keeps me in a place where I'm really focused and paying attention, and I just don't want to step wrongly."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Smith defends Grey's bosses

CAREER Actress Brooke Smith has defended her former TV bosses at Grey's Anatomy, insisting she has "no hard feelings" after her lesbian character was written out of the show, imdb.com reports.

Network bosses announced Smith would be axed from the show last month, sparking rumours she was written out of the series in a bid to end her character Dr. Erica Hahn's burgeoning homosexual affair.

Grey's creator Shonda Rhimes refuted the reports, telling Us Weekly, "Brooke Smith was obviously not fired for playing a lesbian. Clearly it's not an issue as we have a lesbian character on the show — Calliope Torres (Sara Ramirez). Unfortunately, we did not find that the magic and chemistry with Brooke's character would sustain in the long run."

Actor Isaiah Washington, who was let go from the show last year, lashed out at his former bosses, calling their decision to cut Smith "disgusting."

But Smith has defended Rhimes, adding, "It's an end of a chapter. It was a good experience. I'd played gay characters before, and I don't think that's going to end. There's no hard feelings. I have other projects now, so it is what it is."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Twain may be dating again

RELATIONSHIPS Singer Shania Twain has sparked reports she's dating the husband of the woman her ex is alleged to have had an affair with after the mystery man was spotted escorting Twain around New York recently, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

Twain split from her husband Robert (Mutt) Lange in May, following his revelation that he was romancing the couple's longtime secretary Marie-Anne Thiebaud, who was the manager of their Swiss estate.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Jolie spends less on Pitt

PEOPLE It appears even stars are affected by the recession.

In Touch has learned that Angelina Jolie's 45th birthday present to Brad Pitt will be another motorcycle. But this year's base price on the new Ducati is $12,000 US — much less compared to last year's gift that cost a reported $100,000.

Still, Jolie knows what Pitt likes, intouchweekly.com reports.

"She's getting him the new Ducati Monster 1100S titanium," an insider tells In Touch.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

I weigh 200 lbs: Oprah

HEALTH In January's O magazine, Oprah Winfrey confesses that she now weighs 200 pounds and has "fallen off the wagon," usmagazine.com reports.

"I'm mad at myself," writes Winfrey. "I'm embarrassed. I can't believe that after all these years, all the things I know how to do, I'm still talking about my weight. I look at my thinner self and think, 'How did I let this happen again?'"

In the article, Winfrey says she has struggled with an out-of-balance thyroid and the condition made her develop "a fear of working out."

She confessed that she's packed on 40 pounds since she weighed 160 pounds in 2006.

"Yes, you're adding correctly; that means the dreaded 2-0-0," Winfrey says. "I was so frustrated I started eating whatever I wanted — and that's never good."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Knight asks to leave hit show, report says

CAREER Grey's Anatomy star T.R. Knight, who has played George O'Malley since the show's debut, has asked producers to write him off the hit medical drama, People.com reports.

While details of his exit have yet to be ironed out, a source close to the situation says it seems likely Knight's request will be granted and he will be released from his contract.

Recent reports that Knight has not been attending table reads for upcoming episodes or that he had walked off the set and cleaned out his dressing room are inaccurate, a rep for Knight tells People.

"He has been there every day. He was at a table read yesterday. He hasn't said goodbye to anyone."

The rep had no further comment on his possible exit.

So why does Knight want to leave?

"Have you seen the show lately?" says the source. Knight has received little screen time this season.

"It's time to move on," says the source. "It just feels like this is the right time to go."

ABC had no comment.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

No regrets for Kate Hudson

RELATIONSHIPS It's been two years since she split from husband Chris Robinson, but Kate Hudson is in no hurry to walk back down the aisle, People.com reports.

"I don't know if I'll ever get married again," the actress recently told Extra. "I don't know. ... It depends on who you end up with."

Hudson, who has dated actor Owen Wilson and cycling champ Lance Armstrong since her divorce, also said she had no second thoughts about marrying the Black Crowes frontman when she was just 21.

"I don't regret a second of my marriage. ... Thank God for Chris," she explained.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Lohan to write of split

PEOPLE Lindsay Lohan is begging the paparazzi to stop asking her if she's split from girlfriend Samantha Ronson, assuring fans she'd write the news on her blog if they ever broke up, imdb.com reports.

Rumours have swirled about the couple's relationship status since they began dating earlier this year.

They have repeatedly denied splitting, and Lohan has once again taken to her MySpace.com blog to "prove all the liars wrong" — less than a week after slamming previous break-up reports.

"(The paparazzi) should just stop asking altogether," Lohan wrote.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Anderson outfit shocks crowd

PEOPLE Pamela Anderson stunned onlookers when she arrived at a prestigious art fair wearing just a T-shirt and underwear, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The actress seemed unaware of the controversy she was causing at the Art Basel Miami Beach fair, and later posed for photographs bending over paintings with her butt in the air.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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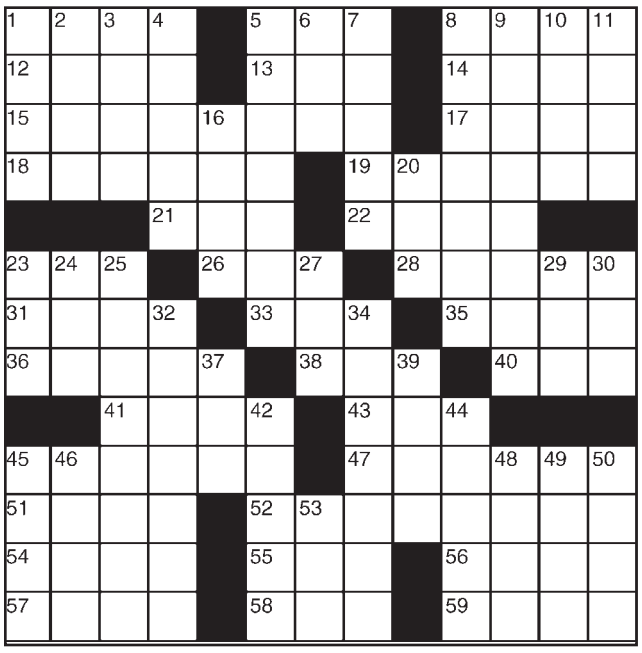

Crossword across

1 Malaria symptom
5 Bowl-shaped utensil
8 Vaulted alcove
12 Lion's share
13 Previous to
14 Litigant
15 Outdoor vendor's wagon
17 Scheme
18 Walk leisurely
19 1-Across component
21 Perch
22 Medal earner
23 Chart
26 Advanced deg.
28 Windsor's merry ones
31 Piece of work
33 Evergreen type
35 Literary sleuth Wolfe
36 After-dinner speech?
38 Runic letter (Var.)
40 Liotta or Romano
41 Burden
43 Bud's partner
45 Baffle
47 PC variety
51 Winged
52 Bulletin board accessories
54 Crooned
55 Indivisible
56 Ostriches' kin
57 Otherwise
58 Youngster
59 Leftovers

Crossword down

1 Roadie's burden, in part
2 Toe woe
3 "Back in the —"
4 Group character
5 Rich
6 Bobby of hockey
7 Sailing vessel
8 Headache remedy
9 Sweater type
10 Signet
11 Sea flock
16 Office holder?
20 Chop
23 Unruly bunch
24 Mimic
25 Sleeper cars
27 Morning moisture
29 Historic period
30 Sauce source
32 Cause of great pain
34 Established firmly
37 Owns
39 Ham's dad
42 Station
44 Top
45 Contemptible
46 Hebrew month
48 Opportunity
49 Responsibility
50 "Hey!"
53 Popular card game

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

3	7					5		9
	8	6	9				3	1
1			4	3			6	
			1		3	9	7	
		8		4		1		
	1	3	5		7			
	3			5	2			8
8	2				6	7	4	
6		7					9	2

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

C	A	S	T		B	E	D		D	I	C	K		
O	G	L	E		I	D	O		I	D	L	E		
C	O	O	L	I	D	G	E		R	E	A	D		
A	G	E		F	E	Y		S	T	A	Y	S		
			A	F	T		B	U	Y					
W	I	M	P	Y		C	O	M	P	A	C	T		
A	V	E	R		W	A	X		O	D	O	R		
D	E	N	I	Z	E	N		W	O	O	D	Y		
			L	I	D		P	A	L					
D	R	A	F	T		L	E	I		T	K	O		
E	U	R	O		T	O	O	L	S	H	E	D		
L	E	G	O		E	O	N		H	E	E	D		
I	D	O	L		A	M	Y		E	E	L	S		

6	2	7	4	9	1	8	5	3
1	3	4	5	7	8	2	9	6
8	5	9	3	2	6	4	1	7
2	8	3	6	5	4	9	7	1
7	9	5	1	8	2	6	3	4
4	6	1	9	3	7	5	8	2
5	4	2	8	1	3	7	6	9
9	1	6	7	4	5	3	2	8
3	7	8	2	6	9	1	4	5

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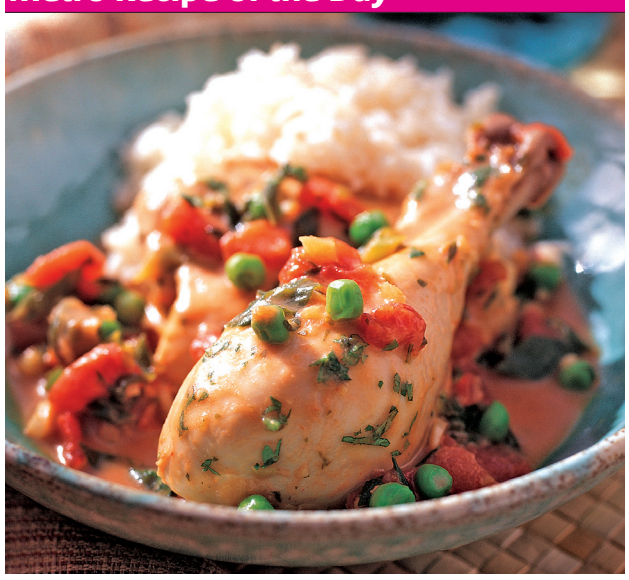
SUDOKU SOLVE TIME:

Under 13 min .....Genius
13-17 min.....Scholar
17-21 min .....Smart
21-25 min .....Not bad
25+ min.....Keep practising

Metro Recipe of the Day



Chicken with Peas and Cilantro

INGREDIENTS:

3/4 cup (175 mL) canned crushed tomatoes
1/2 cup (125 mL) coconut milk
1/2 cup (125 mL) chopped cilantro
2 tbsp (25 mL) fresh lime juice
2 tbsp (25 mL) soy sauce
1 tbsp (15 mL) light brown sugar
3 scallions, thinly sliced
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 tbsp (15 mL) minced fresh ginger
1 tsp (5 mL) salt
1 whole chicken (about 3 1/2 lbs/2 kg), cut into 8 serving pieces, skin removed
1 cup (250 mL) rice
1 package (10 oz/285 g) frozen peas

METHOD:

1. Preheat oven to 350 F (180 C). In Dutch oven, combine tomatoes, coconut milk, 1/4 cup (50 mL) of cilantro, the lime juice, soy sauce, brown sugar, scallions, garlic, ginger and 1/2 tsp (2 mL) of salt.
2. Add chicken to Dutch oven, turning to coat. Bring mixture to a boil over medium heat. Cover, place in oven, and bake for 40 minutes or until chicken is cooked through.
3. Meanwhile, in medium covered saucepan, bring 2 1/4 cups (550 mL) water to a boil. Add rice and remaining 1/2 tsp (2 mL) salt. Reduce heat to a simmer, cover, and cook 17 minutes or until rice is tender.
4. Stir peas into Dutch oven and cook 5 minutes or until heated through. Stir in remaining 1/4 cup (50 mL) cilantro. Serve sauce and chicken over rice.

SERVES 4

rd.ca
For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to **rd.ca** or check out **Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!**

Horoscopes

AVATAR VENUS

ARIES
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
Disbelief grows after a heated exchange. Something in the news will result in health benefits. Prepare to get up early tomorrow.

TAURUS
APRIL 21-MAY 21
Use a headache to avoid a meeting. A document causes hope to rise up. Share a friend's displeasure with a troublemaker.

GEMINI
MAY 22-JUNE 21
Preoccupy yourself with a thriller. You'll wonder if you're under observation. A stranger needs better medication.

CANCER
JUNE 22-JULY 22
A family gathering will come up soon. Keep your eye on a close friend. Be prepared to come to the aid of a depressed person.

LEO
JULY 23-AUG 23
Don't lose out in life by lying. Rational people want help with a decision. Don't feel guilty for having an outrageous argument.

VIRGO
AUG 24-SEPT 22
Family problems will reveal a desperate wish. Be wise enough to stop when given a warning. Things will be changed before an announcement is made.

LIBRA
SEPT 23-OCT 23
A major life change is in the works. Prepare for a zany encounter. Be on your toes if scoundrels are around.

SCORPIO
OCT 24-NOV 22
A hair-raising adventure takes place. An insulted man makes too much of a bad thing. You are subjected to the whims of fate.

SAGITTARIUS
NOV 23-DEC 21
Take a careful look at a woman in red. Expect a phone call from a funny stranger. Kindness and compassion will cause a delay.

CAPRICORN
DEC 22-JAN 20
A minor crisis will be very amusing to bystanders. Don't hold your breath waiting for a reward. A surprise provides a trivial challenge.

AQUARIUS
JAN 21-FEB 18
Don't flinch when something wonderful happens. A dear friend is awaiting a divine event. People will talk about the good old days.

PISCES
FEB 19-MARCH 20
Maintain your sense of humour at all times. Unrealistic expectations will instigate a change. Difficult decisions will have to be made.

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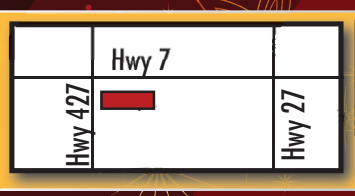

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★★★★★ 5-STAR CRASH TEST RATING
NHTSA - Frontal and side impacts††

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NHTSA - Frontal and side impacts††

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